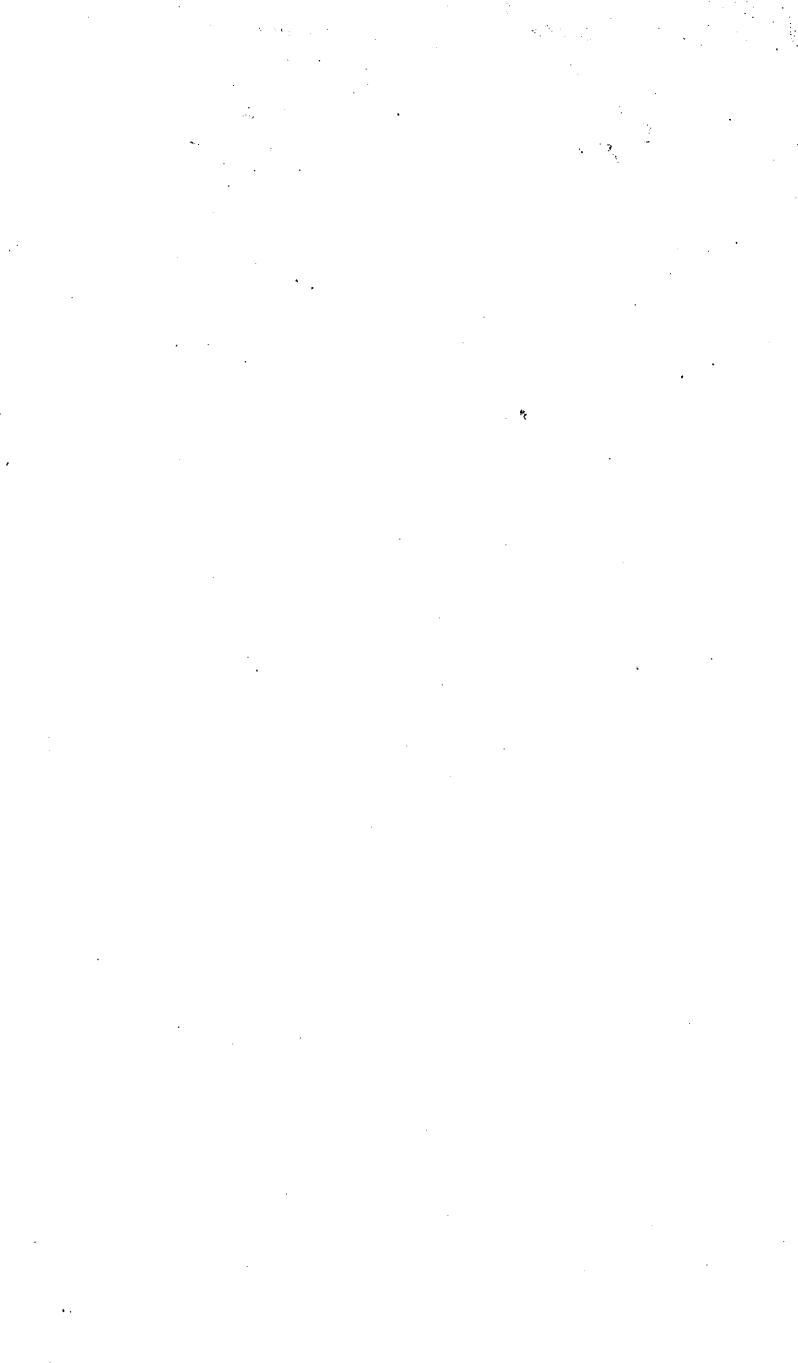


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THE CHURCH AND THE NEW AGE

THE CHURCH AND THE NEW AGE

BY
HENRY CARTER

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD	vii
--------------------	-----

SECTION I

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW AGE

CHAPTER I

THE NOTES OF THE NEW AGE	3
------------------------------------	---

CHAPTER II

HAS THE CHURCH LOST GRIP ?	14
--------------------------------------	----

SECTION II

DEMOCRACY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN	59
--	----

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN (<i>continued</i>)	77
---	----

CHAPTER III

THE IDEALS OF BRITISH DEMOCRACY	116
---	-----

CHAPTER IV

ARE DEMOCRATIC IDEALS CHRISTIAN ?	133
---	-----

SECTION III

PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN CHURCH

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S BUSINESS ? . . .	PAGE 155
---------------------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DEMOCRACY	175
--	-----

CHAPTER III

NON-CHURCH-GOING	200
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IV

NON-CHURCH-GOING ; ONE WAY OF REMEDY .	224
--	-----

CHAPTER V

FISSURES AND FLAWS IN THE CHURCH . . .	236
--	-----

CHAPTER VI

THE VITAL NEEDS OF THE AGE AND OF THE CHURCH	261
---	-----

FOREWORD

“I BELIEVE that the Church stands even now at the parting of the ways ; that, humanly speaking, the next few years will decide whether it is to shrink into a pietistic sect, or spread and develop, until it is actually the English people viewed in its relation to God.”

So wrote Canon Peile in his Bampton Lecture of 1907.¹ The march of events since the words were penned sustains his judgment. We live in the lusty youth of a New Age. Modes of thought and forms of speech which won the assent of our fathers seem to a younger generation outworn, powerless, unrelated to present life. Ideals but dimly perceived by them enkindle to-day imagination and passionate endeavour. It is an age of insurrection and reconstruction. Things as they are will not abide simply because they are, but only if they can justify a right to be. Old institutions everywhere, industrial, political, ecclesiastical, feel the impact of this challenge.

Even the Christian Church may not hope to escape it. Nor ought she to hope to do so. She has “an eternal gospel to proclaim,” and no mood of men is more favourable to the Church’s real task than that which insistently demands proofs of truth and worth.

The crucial question is, *How* will the Church meet

¹ *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. ix.

the summons of the New Age? What if, instead of welcoming its challenge to establish her right to be, the Church shut herself up to her lovers and ignore her critics; what if, half aware that her corporate life fails to express the richness of her Master's teaching, in that she, the Body of Christ, is no clear mirror of His Soul, she none the less cling to earthly interests instead of deepening her fellowship with the Man of Sorrows, and with suffering Humanity for whom He died? Then the age which needs her message must seek in vain or win it elsewhere, while the frontiers of the Church fall back, and her temples cry for worshippers; then also Christ will find the citizens of this New Age, notwithstanding her timidity and time-service, and set His tabernacle with men beyond her walls.

But what if the Church accept the challenge, and make answer to it? What if she restudy and restate the Evangel, and declare its supremacy in every sphere of life, over every human relationship? What if she aver that "the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God," and without fear or favour thrust from her unspirituality and prayerlessness, respect of persons and of money, mistrust of moral movements beyond her borders? What if she recover the revolutionary passion of her primitive days, and fight sin with fury, and joy if once again the vested interests of inhumanity become her persecutors? Then will this be in truth the *New Age*, for beyond all else it shall become the Age of Christ.

To lead the mighty task of the century, the rooting-out of wrong, personal and social, and the reshaping of the fabric of life that life itself may come to its own: that is the Church's opportunity. To be self-regarding instead of sacrificial, the friend of wealth instead of the lover of all; to see Humanity stricken, and on the plea that social sin does not concern the Church, to pass by on the other side: that is her peril. Divine

Love will win, we know. Though priest and Levite fail, God has always His Samaritan. But why should not the Church fulfil her destiny to be Humanity's Helper, because the Bride of the Son of Man ?

At every stage in the preparation of this volume, the writer has been conscious of indebtedness to earlier workers in the field. The literature springing out of the movements to be described is very wide in range and full in detail ; this is particularly the case in relation to the rise of Democracy in Britain. There is, however, one exception, an inevitable one. It concerns the urgent and perplexing problem of Non-church-going. The problem is not a new one. There have always been non-church-goers ; it would be interesting to collate from the records of the pulpit and the press, and even from the statute-book, indications of the extent of non-church-going in preceding generations. Yet few will be inclined to deny that the problem has become more acute in recent years. A glance through the chapter entitled, *Has the Church lost grip ?* will establish this beyond controversy.

It is in respect of the latest developments of this subject that literature fails us ; and here, by the willing help of the denominational secretaries and others, it has been possible to supplement the existing statistical investigations of Church-going by "Tables" showing the rise or fall in the number of children under religious instruction in the Sunday schools, and also in the number of Church members. The significant result obtained is the fixing of the year in which the present marked decline of the influence of the Churches began, a result which makes it possible to estimate the probable causes. The author wishes now to express cordial appreciation of the help without which the "Tables" mentioned could not have been compiled.

He is also under special obligation to Prof. W. F. Lofthouse, M.A., for counsel on many a knotty point,

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SECTION I

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW AGE

Life, then, was given you by God that you might use it for the benefit of Humanity, that you might direct your individual faculties to the development of the faculties of your fellow-men, and that you might contribute by your work some portion to that collective work of improvement, and that discovery of the truth which the generations slowly but continuously carry on.—MAZZINI.

CHAPTER I

THE NOTES OF THE NEW AGE

WHAT are the Notes of the New Age? To compile a lengthy list of its characteristics would be easy. For our purpose it suffices to recognise those aspects of its many-sided life whose importance is that they disclose the moral significance of the present crisis. First stands the Rebirth of Social Consciousness. Second, the Broadening of Life. Third, the Spiritual Interpretation of Life.

I. THE REBIRTH OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The word "Rebirth" is used advisedly. A widespread consciousness of life as a social unity persisted through all the external changes of English history, until it at last gave way under the pressure of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. When Wesley's evangelical ministry opened in 1738 the framework of old English life survived. On the land the feudal tradition still bound owner and tenant together; in the towns journeyman and apprentice still lived with their master, hand-workers nearly all of them, for the era of machinery had scarcely begun. When Wesley died in 1791 the Industrial Revolution was afoot, and England in a fair way to become in the next century the workshop of the world. Within the span of his public life are to be placed the epoch-making inventions which changed the character of the nation's

industries, and in doing so demolished most of what remained of the old social organisation.

Coal replaced wood in the smelting of iron, and new towns sprang up on the iron- and coal-fields of the northern counties. Canals, the precursors of railways, date from 1767. In 1769 James Watt patented his steam-engine, and modern engineering was born. The brilliant inventions of machinery for the spinning and weaving of cotton and wool belong to the same decade ; the mill supplanted cottage-weaving, and the factory system was founded.

The half century following Wesley's death revealed the grim human significance of these changes. Steam-power and the machine ousted the manual worker from a multitude of industries, and turned him from a skilled craftsman into a factory-hand. The old and often kindly relations between master and man broke down ; the mill-owner, the iron-master, the colliery proprietor counted his "hands" by hundreds, and worked them long and late to build up his fortune ; while they, ill-nourished, under-paid, and unorganised, lived as serfs, their brutalised lot the price that Britain paid for her industrial supremacy.

Thomas Cooper tells how in 1840 he found the stocking-weavers of Leicester working for a wage which, when deductions for "frame-rent," lights, oil, etc., had been made, left them but 4s. 6d. a week. Women and little children had perforce to labour to supplement such scanty earnings. A print of 1842, illustrating methods of coal-mining, shows an old woman hoisting two children from the shaft by turning a winch. The barbaric lot of the workers lives on the pages of Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*. Coketown, which he describes with little disguise or exaggeration, is a typical Midland or Northern industrial town of that period, where nothing was to be seen "but what was severely workful," where "Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing

airs and gases were bricked in." Its interminable serpents of factory smoke, its black canal, and river purple with ill-smelling dye, its sooty brick factories, its "large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next": such was the civic abortion to which the Industrial Revolution gave birth. There Mr. M'Choakumchild, schoolmaster, fed little Coketowners on "nothing but facts," sedulously stifling all childlike fancies and imagination; and there Messrs. Gradgrind and Bounderby grew rich on the toils of the "hands."

Against such conditions revolt was certain. The story, from the Luddite Riots of 1816, through the Chartist agitation and the beginnings of Trade Unionism, to the organised Labour and Socialist Movement of to-day, will be told in later chapters. Slowly but certainly a new hope has wakened in the ranks of the workers, a new ideal become their guiding light. "Each for himself" was the watchword of the sorrowful past; "each for all and all for each" is the nobler watchword of Labour to-day. Social consciousness is reborn.

Nor is the hope of economic emancipation limited to the artisan. In ever-increasing number men and women of the trading and professional classes share the aspiration. Class-consciousness, which was the ominous mark of the revolt in its earlier stages, is yielding to a communal consciousness, a sense of the wellbeing of all. Hand-worker and head-worker are no longer arrayed as foes, but are allies in warfare against the commonwealth's real enemies, the Gradgrinds and the Bounderbys, whose wealth is won by

monopoly, tyranny, and shameless exploitation of the poor.

Thus the social consciousness of the twentieth century differs from that of the centuries preceding the Industrial Revolution. Then it was a consciousness possessed by the Few of their responsibility for the Many, the paternal benevolence of landowner, ecclesiastic, and master-craftsman for those who laboured under them, or sought their aid. To-day it is a consciousness of the responsibility of All for All. The age of patronage and charity is dying, the age of justice and brotherhood dawning. With its dawn old things are passing away. The slum, the sweating horror, the needless wrongs of under-employment and unemployment, the wastage of child-life, the cancerous growths of intemperance and gambling, the brutal contrast of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice with poverty below the level of decent human subsistence: these and their like stand at the bar of the new century, indefensible, condemned. In a word, Coketown is doomed.

II. THE BROADENING OF LIFE

No Act of Parliament of the last half-century has had an effect on the life of the British people comparable with that of William Edward Forster's Elementary Education Act of 1870, which founded the national system of education. Followed by the Mundella Act of 1880, which made school attendance compulsory everywhere, and the Act of 1891, which made national education gratuitous, it set in progress a new order of life for the industrial classes. Now we see the first-fruits of the harvest. In answer to the larger intelligence, literature, art, music, facilities for recreation and travel, are brought within compass of modest means. A superficial judgment might easily assert that popular taste in reading and recreation craves the

trashy and tawdry. A fair reply would be that the educational programme is still very far from complete ; and that the adults of to-day were at school when the range of subjects, methods of teaching, and opportunities for continued education were even more restricted. Despite these limitations, there are abundant proofs that contemporary democracy has heart and head for what is serious and of abiding worth. Witness the steady flow of the sons and daughters of working-class homes into the teaching profession ; the keen study of economic questions, and wide circulation of sociological literature ; the thousands of Brotherhoods assembling Sunday by Sunday to listen to addresses on ethical and experimental religion, and listening most attentively, as personal observation attests, to the speakers whose words reveal most thought.

Yet from the point of view of the Church it must be recognised that this broadening of life, and multiplication of its interests, has increased and not lessened her difficulties. People have more to think about than a generation ago, and so they think about the Church less. A clamorous press and a flood of cheap literature compete with the pulpit for public attention. The development of local government, and the entrance of organised labour into politics, have claimed the leisure and service of men and women, many of whom, a decade or two since, would have given both unsparingly to the Church. Technical and Art Schools claim the week-evenings of the studious and promising of the younger people, while the pleasure-seeking find the attractions of sport, the theatre, the concert-room or picture-hall ever more engrossing. Thus the Church loses intimate touch with tens of thousands who have been scholars in her Sunday schools. Sunday is rapidly ceasing to be a day of rest, and becoming a day of roving ; train, tram, and 'bus services increase, and the visit to friends tends to replace Church attend-

ance ; whilst cyclists stream from town to country, and the motor-car breaks up the old local associations of worship.

Modern life is a restless, turbulent stream, broken loose from the curbing, confining banks of former habit and convention. Small wonder that many an older Churchman looks on perplexed and anxious. If to educate, as the Greeks held, is not merely to fill the mind with knowledge, but to turn the eye of the soul toward the light, how shall the eye of the New Age see the Light of the World, if the Age passes heedlessly by His Church ?

In another sense life has broadened amazingly. The world waits at our breakfast table. Let any reader make the simple experiment of glancing down the columns of his morning paper to note the geographical sources of its news. To-day¹ the headings include Labour Demonstrations in Paris, Unrest in Spain, Portuguese Politics, Anglo-German Relations, the Jews in Russia, Turkish " Dreadnoughts," Women's Rights in Iceland, Moroccan Revolt, Riots in China, Anglo-American Peace Treaty, New Steamship Line to Canada, Penny Postage in Australia, Japanese Expedition to the South Pole. Add the references to foreign countries in the shipping advertisements and mail intelligence, in the quotations of the Money Markets, and reports of Company Meetings, in Parliamentary questions and debates, in book reviews and leading articles, and it will be seen that the tribute-area of modern journalism is the whole world. Distance has ceased to divide. " Our insular isolation " is a phrase, not a fact. We are witnessing the building-up of a World-State of commerce. Provincial life broadened into national when the railroads linked the larger towns in Britain two generations ago. National life broadened into international when telegraphy girdled the world

¹ May 2, 1911.

in the last generation. It may well prove that the æroplane will effect as marvellous a change in human relationships as did either railroad or telegraph.

And if travel, scientific discovery, and commerce are making for a world-unity in industry, in the realm of thought the play and interplay of mind also touches the whole race. Here, almost with dramatic suddenness, vast issues of the New Age confront the Church. The Christ, she proclaims, is to be the "Saviour of the World"; now an awakened world awaits the message concerning the Christ. The East is renascent. In India and China there is the glow of national feeling. Japan is the astonishment of the age. The Mohammedan peoples are astir; Islam is emergent, advancing. It is "the decisive hour in foreign missions." The destinies of continents and centuries lie in the womb of To-day. Humanly speaking, the measure of the answer of the Church of the Christian lands of the West to the call of the non-Christian lands of the East and the South, during the present generation, will be the measure of the direct sway of Christianity over the World-Life of To-morrow.

But that answer of the Christian West to the non-Christian East must bear moral credentials as well as spiritual enthusiasms. The stranger is within our gates. Hindoo, Chinese, and Japanese students are in English schools and universities. They see our cathedrals and churches; they see also our reeking slums. They read our Gospel teaching, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"; and in face of boastful wealth and piteous poverty—here wasteful luxury, there starvation's pittance—they ask, Whom does Britain serve? The Social Question and the Foreign Call are integrally one. The Holy Message should issue from a Holy Land.

III. THE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF LIFE

The third note of the New Age sounds hope. Great thoughts concerning life are stirring imagination, and waking Christian experience in many whose teachings strongly impress the public mind. A spiritual interpretation of life is dominant.

One sees this in the failure of Agnosticism to satisfy the thinker to-day. A generation ago Huxley, in his attack on the unscientific theology of his day, went to the other extreme, and proclaimed the Gospel of Not-Knowing. Take, for example, his lecture "On a Piece of Chalk," delivered in 1868. From "the bit of chalk which every carpenter carries about in his breeches-pocket," he traces the story of life and death, of sea and land. Minute marine animals, the globigerinæ, flourishing millenniums ago at great depths of the ocean, died, and strewed its bed with their skeletons. So through countless ages they and other aquatic animals built up in their death a new ocean-floor, in places hundreds of feet thick. Then came a great movement of the sea-bed, upheaving this hidden land, and laying it bare to the sun as the chalk deposits of to-day, in whose structure the microscope reveals the fossils of the globigerinæ. On these up-thrown beds of chalk, forests grew, the homes of strange, uncouthly beasts, whose fossil frames men still unearth. Then Huxley, pointing rapidly to other vast physical changes explaining, for example, the Cromer boulder-clay resting on the chalk and containing other records of life, the fossil-bones of wolf and beaver and finally of primitive man, reaches his conclusion. "A small beginning has led us to a great ending," he says. "In the shifting 'without haste, without rest' of the land and sea, as in the endless variation of the forms assumed by living beings, we have observed *nothing but the product of forces originally possessed by the substance of the universe.*"¹

¹ *Lectures and Lay Sermons*, p. 21.

That was the typical Agnostic position. Beyond what the microscope could reveal there might, or might not be, a life-giving, life-directing Being. The Agnostic would not say. He could only speak of "forces originally possessed by the substance of the universe," of which Nature as we know it to-day is the product.

But human thought cannot rest at an avowal of ignorance. It must press on in quest of knowledge. So it has come to pass that in circles of scientific thought where Agnosticism prevailed in Huxley's day the avowal, "I believe in God," is now heard. As an outstanding illustration, set over against Huxley's position that of Sir Oliver Lodge, who recently affirmed that "there must be some Intelligence supreme over the whole process of evolution, or things could not be so well organised and so beautiful as they are." In *The Substance of Faith Allied with Science* Sir Oliver has defined his own attitude to Christianity in singularly lucid and arresting terms. "I believe," he says, in this personal confession of Christian faith,

I believe in one Infinite and Eternal Being, a guiding and loving Father, in whom all things consist.

I believe that the Divine Nature is specially revealed to man through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lived and taught and suffered in Palestine 1,900 years ago, and has since been worshipped by the Christian Church as the immortal Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is ever ready to help us along the way towards goodness and truth; that prayer is a means of communion between man and God; and that it is our privilege through faithful service to enter into the Life Eternal, the Communion of Saints, and the Peace of God.¹

There can be no ultimate disagreement between science and religion. Both are ways of approach to God, modes of apprehending Him who is the Truth;

¹ *The Substance of Faith Allied with Science*, p. 96.

and Truth can only contradict error and displace ignorance, it cannot conflict with itself. It may be that the complete reconciliation will be found in the field of psychology. As psychologists map out more surely the territory of mental activities, and especially the under-world of sub-consciousness, there will stand revealed the sphere of God's closest dealings with men, and—more fully than now—the method of those dealings; for, in Dr. Cutten's vivid terms, the Mind is the human mould into which the Great Moulder pours the molten metal of His Will.¹

From another side of life also, the side of social reconstruction, the note of the spiritual interpretation of life sounds forth. Time was when social reform was regarded mainly as a "Stomach Problem." Nor was this surprising. The first needs of the half-starved thousands are sufficiency of food, clothing, house-room, care in sickness and old age, and security of employment. But to work to win for all men the means of life inevitably raises the question of the purpose of life. "Is not the life *more* than the food, and the body than the raiment?" Thus the social problem becomes ultimately a Soul Problem. There is conceivable, and there must be actually possible, a new social order in which human energies will not be worn down and exhausted in the mere struggle to live, but in which, beyond the toil necessary to earn a living, man will have space and strength for greater tasks, the joyous culture of mind and heart in education and worship, the exploration of Nature's untrodden ways, the building-up of the Brotherhood of Humanity in ministries of personal and communal service.

So in the social crusade the old idealism wakes again to life. Men dream once more of the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God, where there shall neither be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, into which nothing unclean shall enter, nor he that maketh an

¹ *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, chap. i.

abomination or a lie, wherein the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof, and God's servants shall do Him service. From the present distress to that triumphant splendour is a long and toilsome journey, but many a social worker holds bravely on because, like Bunyan's pilgrim, from "an high hill, called Clear" he can look toward Celestial City, and seem to see "something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place." To such men human life is incalculably precious. It cannot be valued with gold; it is spiritual; it is transcendent. They war against the slum because it wastes life, against war because it shatters human brotherhood. For the sake of life they redevise the machinery of commerce and public affairs, that these may serve Humanity and not enslave it. They are the visionaries of the New Age, and whether they know it or not, their vision is of God.

The significance to the Church of the revival of a spiritual interpretation of life is obvious. As this richer view passes on from the lonely thinker and the social idealist, and becomes a part of the common thought of the age, a new mental attitude will confront the Church's witness, an attitude in closest harmony with her message rightly conceived and spoken.

CHAPTER II

HAS THE CHURCH LOST GRIP ?

I. THE LIMITATIONS OF SCHEDULES

HEARTS cannot be read as heads are counted. No man, no Church, can take census of the Christians of Britain. Numerical standards are insufficient where spiritual values are to be estimated. Over a large area of Church life statistics have little worth.

What of the prayer-life of the Church ? There may be more spiritual intensity "where two or three are gathered together" than when seeming worshippers meet by hundreds. What of the winning of recruits ? One lad won for Christ with the promise of a Paul, a Wesley, a Livingstone, may make the day of his dedication an unforgettable date in the calendar of the faithful. What of gifts for Church enterprises ? Emphatically let it be said here, put not your trust in figures. The moral significance of a subscription list may be in inverse ratio to its worth in pounds sterling ; still the poor widow's mites outweigh the superfluity of the rich. At close quarters with the challenge, Has the Church lost grip, something must be said of the Church's reserves of strength, of the vision that rekindles passion, the prayer that stirs the arm of God and bends the will of man, the faith that moves mountains, the sacrifice that flinches not at death. These cannot be gotten for gold, nor can schedules tell their worth.

And yet, from earliest days, the statistician has had place in ordered Christianity. Luke was the first of the clan: "about a hundred and twenty" he counted in the assembly that chose Matthias in the stead of Judas;¹ "about three thousand souls," he records, were added to them at the great Pentecost.² Certainly the figures give definiteness to our mental picture of the origins of the Church. That is one gain from statistics. *Within the limited area of Church life in which they have validity*, they help us to set the Church as an organised body against the background of the times, and to judge—as far as judgment can be passed by us—whether her hold on life is stronger or weaker. To a certain extent they do register the Church's grip of the age. So it is worth asking what relevant Church statistics are available, and within what limits they are of use.

The principal data are: (1) occasional numberings of church-goers, (2) the annual denominational censuses of Sunday-school scholars, and (3) the yearly returns of Church membership. To these may be added, from the realm where statistics do not yet rule, observation of the extent of non-churchgoing.

Counts of church-goers have attracted much attention in recent years, the most famous being the London census of 1902-3, organised by the *Daily News*. Even this careful and systematic undertaking had distinct limitations, as we shall see, and gave rise to some alarmist utterances which need considerable modification. Also since 1902 the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movements have gained ground rapidly, and should receive due heed in an attempt to estimate the extent of church-going to-day.

The annual count of Sunday-school scholars is a partial indication of the touch of the Church with child-life. It does not show all that the Church is doing for the children. Temperance teaching in Bands

¹ Acts i. 15.

² Acts ii. 41.

of Hope, moral and physical development in Boys' Brigades and "Scout" Companies, definite Christian instruction in "Endeavour" Societies, "Junior Guilds," and "Class-Meetings," with a host of ancillary organisations, should not be lost sight of ; nor ought we to forget the family-circles in which Bible teaching is given. All this is to the good, and additional to the religious education of the Sunday-school. On the other hand, the limitations of the Sunday-school are to be remembered. Its work is done for love and not for fee, its buildings are erected and maintained by freewill gifts ; hence the virtues of voluntary effort, namely conviction and enthusiasm, are found side by side with its drawbacks—varying degrees of working efficiency and frequent unsuitability of buildings and apparatus. Experience suggests one other qualification : Sunday-school returns are not infallible. A secretary whose registers emulate the precision of a Blue Book is no *rara avis* in the Sunday-school world ; nor unhappily is he whose memory is his minute-book, and whose imagination makes fine play of schedules. Each year probably sees more care in things secretarial ; but if the question be pressed, Are Sunday-school statistics really reliable, the answer must be "Yes and No, within limits."

Statistics of Church membership are, most of all, open to qualification. This not through laxity in compilation—presumably great care is exercised in that—but because of the radical impropriety of applying the science of numbers to the arts of the spiritual life. A census can be taken of church-goers or of Sunday-school scholars ; the way of the people's steps may be frequented, and their entrance to the sanctuary noted. But who can know the way of a people's Soul, and tell in ciphers its quest for God ! It is gravely to be doubted whether the Church gains much from her yearly reckoning of members. The tribute unto God of the things that are God's cannot be told in common coin. Small

wonder that different standards of membership are recognised in the Churches. For example, in the case of the Church of England, the number of confirmations throughout the year, and of communicants at Easter, is given; in the Wesleyan Methodist Church members are enrolled and counted in class-meetings; in the Baptist Church the roll of membership is of adults who have made confession of faith, usually in the sacrament of baptism; in the Society of Friends the children of members are counted. And in all the Churches, in varying degrees, there are in the worshipping congregations men and women of earnest Christian life who, for various reasons, have not accepted the onus of membership, and therefore are not included in the census of Church members.

This preparatory survey of data leads to two conclusions. First, the figures available are subject to many qualifications. Second, valid deductions are possible only when *different sets of figures point the same way*. If in all, or in most of the Churches, notwithstanding their different ways of enumeration, there is a distinct advance or a distinct shrinkage, we then are confronted by statistics of considerable value. It is further probable that if these indications of the flow or ebb of life within the Church are set against the background of the age, if we try to explain them in relation to movements of thought and changes of habit in life outside the organised Church, we may discern causes as well as effects.

II. THE IMMEASURABLE AREA OF CHURCH LIFE

It will be well to begin here, lest the Church that cannot be counted be forgotten when we plunge into figures.

Imagine the moral poverty of Britain if all Christian influences were withdrawn. Thus most cogently can

one present to the general mind the mission the Church has fulfilled and is fulfilling. Many words concerning divergence from the primitive Christian ideal must be written ere this book ends. Here in plain, conspicuous terms let the Church's gifts of goodness to the nation be acknowledged.

Gifts of living goodness, the phrase might better run, for the chiefest contribution of the Church to any age is the gift of the good man. Sometimes he is also the great man, the hero ; a true priest like Wesley, a true prophet as Kingsley. But more often it is the unconsidered good man who saves ; the ten nameless righteous for whose sake the Lord would spare the city. Out of every home take God-fearingness ; out of every shop and counting-house and factory the integrity born of Christian faith ; out of every village and city the ordered worship of the Eternal, the teaching of children in the name of Jesus, the Christian preaching of neighbourly love and civic justice ; out of every Council Chamber and Hall of Parliament take the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount ; out of the heart of every man cast the spell of God and the call of the Cross : and what then ? Then in truth would the soil of life be saltless, and the ways of the world grow dark.

If any reply that goodness lives where the Church toils not, in men and women who never cross her threshold, this shall be the answer. The threshold of the Church is not of timber that decays, nor is her home in temples made with hands ; the Church is timeless, eternal, her threshold the vision of God, her home the ages ; and, since "the longer the world lives the more is it ruled by the dead," we all of us are heirs of the goodness of the past ; God through the life of our fathers comes to us. We are debtors to the Church of yesterday, to the Church of the Apostles and the Evangelists and the Fathers, the Church of Augustine and Wycliffe, of Latimer and Knox, of Milton and Bunyan, of Whitfield and the Wesleys, and of the

unnumbered good whose blood courses in our veins. It is true to say of the moral goodness that is in us that in no small measure we are as we are because they were what they were. We may cut ourselves off from the worship and labours of the Church of to-day, if we will; with the ministries of the Church of yesterday we are indissolubly linked. Therefore let him who hates the Church's faults hate not the Church, lest he sin against his race.

This also is to be said. In the Church is an un-earthly power, spiritual, transformative, comparable only to that volcanic energy that flung the mountains forth, and thrust the sea-bed high above the rushing waters. Sometimes it overturns the tyranny of inward wrong, and the soul in man strides forth to freedom. If any hold that power to cast out demons has left the Church, let him read in Mr. Begbie's *Broken Earthenware* of The Puncher, The Tight Handful, and Old Born Drunk; men whose names declare their past, but whose uniform of the Salvation Army tells of a sudden and abiding emergence from the storm-wrack of sin. "There is no medicine, no Act of Parliament, no moral treatise, and no invention of philanthropy which can transform a man radically bad into a man radically good"; but the might of Christ in the Church can and does.

Sometimes this eruptive energy upheaves society. It was so in the Reformation age, in the Puritan days, in the Methodist movement. It is so to-day in the passion for social righteousness that breaks up the placid acceptance of injustice as though it were justice. Of this there will be much to say; the Church has not always seen, in part does not see now, what her own teachings infold and inspire. For the moment we need but recognise the expulsive power, the re-creative force inherent in the truths the Church proclaims. The strength which turns a serf of sin into a son of God can fashion out of the waste and welter we mis-

name modern *society* a true human comradeship, wise and fair and holy, for the Good Man implies the Good World.

Over an area of life immeasurably vast the spiritualising influence of the Church is felt. The deeds of her sons of the older ages abide ; we build on their battlefields. And these are her offerings to the New Age : a history of high encounters for the truth's sake, an unsurpassable standard of noble life displayed in the life of Jesus, and an unfailing treasure of living gifts of goodness.

III. THE MEASURABLE AREA OF CHURCH LIFE

Holding in mind the qualifications already stated, we examine the available data to discover whether the Church retains or relaxes grip of the age.

1. *Loss or Gain in Congregations.*—The best known censuses of church-goers are those taken in London in 1886 and in 1902-3. That in 1886 was planned by Sir William Roberston Nicoll, and the results appeared in the first numbers of the *British Weekly* ; that in 1902-3, as already mentioned, by the *Daily News*.¹ An exact comparison between them is impossible, because of differences in the methods of census-taking. In 1886 all the churches, small mission-halls excepted, were visited on one day, which chanced to be fine ; in 1902-3 the census " was spread over many months, including the entire winter, and some of the Sundays were wet and foggy " (in 1903 the rainfall was abnormal). Further, in 1886 no attempt was made to differentiate the sexes, nor to distinguish children from adults in the returns ; the 1902-3 plan included this provision. Yet as a rough-and-ready impression

¹ The full figures of the *Daily News* census, with discussions on their significance, will be found in *The Religious Life of London*, edited by Richard Mudie-Smith ; on pp. 281-93 comparison with the 1886 census is made.

of changes in London church-going within the period 1886-1903 the figures serve.

Summarised in a sentence, this is the result. Within those 17 years, while the population of the London area increased by about half a million, the number of church-goers decreased by over 150,000. The decrease was practically confined to the Church of England; the Free Churches almost held their own. The figures are :¹

	Church of England.	Free Churches.
<i>British Weekly</i> census, 1886 . . .	535,715	369,439
<i>Daily News</i> census, 1902-3 . . .	396,196	363,882
Decrease . . .	139,519	5,557

The result is subject to the important weather qualification named above; attendances on one fine day in 1886 contrast with a total including many wet Sundays in 1902-3.

Passing to the 1902-3 census, it should be noted that it covered a larger area than that of 1886, which was restricted to London proper. The *Daily News* enumerators visited all places of worship in Greater London as well, so bringing under review the church-going habits of a population exceeding six millions.

By an ingenious device it was ascertained that the number of morning worshippers also present at evening service averaged 38 per cent. at a number of selected churches in Inner and Greater London. Deducting that proportion of "Twicers," the total of worshippers, as distinct from attendances, was as follows :

Church of England	538,477
Nonconformist Churches	545,317
Roman Catholic Church	96,281
Other Services	72,358
	1,252,433

¹ The number of worshippers at small mission-halls is excluded from the above figures. The Salvation Army returns are not included in the comparison.

This meant that, in round numbers, *one person out of five* registered a church attendance on the census days. It is on this estimate that the familiar but misleading statement is based that "four persons out of five in London never attend church." It involves two assumptions, neither of which can be sustained. First, it assumes that the four persons out of five who were not in church could have been there. But what of little children, the sick, the infirm aged, and those who wait upon them? What, also, of those at work on Sunday? Mr. Mudie-Smith, the organiser of the census, calculated that those who are too young, too old, too busy, or too sick to go to church number 50 per cent. of the population. Now, halving the 1902-3 population of the census area, *i.e.* from six millions to three, so as to deal with those who conceivably could attend church if they would, the actual worshippers at morning or evening service (1,252,433) are seen to be not one-fifth but two-fifths of the possible church-goers.

The second assumption is that the *Daily News* enumerators counted all church-goers. They did not. The Sunday schools were unvisited, though we have partly allowed for their scholars in the above deduction for those "too young" to be at church. Nor were there included the attendants at Men's Adult Schools meeting in the early hours of Sunday, at P.S.A.'s and Men's Meetings on Sunday afternoons, and at all the week-afternoon and week-night devotional gatherings. Allowance should also be made for habitual church-goers who, for one reason or another, did not attend public worship on the census-Sunday. Taking all these into account it is probably within the mark to affirm that the proportion of church-goers to possible church-goers in London in 1902-3 was one in two rather than two in five.

The final statement would therefore be, not that "four persons out of five in London never attend church," but that *in 1902-3 about one-half of the possible*

church-going population of London was indifferent or hostile to the churches. That is certainly serious enough.

As to the proportion of the sexes, and of children to adults, the figures for Inner London were :

		Men.	Women.	Children. ¹
Morning Service	. .	133,322	180,513	185,106
Evening	„ .	133,305	232,486	138,629

As the attendances of men at early morning and at afternoon Men's Sunday Services are not included in the above details, it will be best to leave them without comment.

No later census of church-going in London as a whole has been taken. Unhappily there is no substantial ground for supposing matters to have improved. Certainly the coming of the motor-car, the growth of "week-ending" in the country, and the general increase in cheap travelling facilities on Sunday, have made the day still less one dedicated to the quietude of worship. Nor has any great religious movement stirred the Metropolis since 1903.

In the provinces a particularly useful census of church-going, from our point of view, was taken in Liverpool in 1908, under the auspices of the Liverpool Free Church Council. Its advantages to our study are that (1) it presents a picture of church-going in a great provincial city, (2) it is more recent than the London census, and (3) its results can in part be compared with preceding censuses of Liverpool church-going taken by the *Liverpool Daily Post* in 1881, 1891, and 1902. Its chief limitation is that the census refers exclusively to the Free Churches ; but "nearly one-fourth of the population of Liverpool and Bootle is Roman Catholic," the Church of England has also

¹ "Children" included all apparently under 15 years of age. Separate "Children's Services," distinct from the Sunday school, and held during "church hours" were enumerated and included in the total of children present at worship.

a strong hold of the city's life, and there is a considerable Jewish and foreign population; it must, therefore, be remembered that the figures which follow represent the church-going habits of a proportion only of the citizens of Liverpool. For this reason the standard of comparison is not the ratio of church-attendants to population, as in London, but of worshippers present at morning and evening service compared with the number of sittings in the churches in which they met for worship.

The result of the census of the Liverpool Free Churches was this. "*Taking Liverpool as a whole, 18 per cent. of the seats were occupied in the morning and 38½ per cent. at night.*" That is the average; of course some districts of the city were much better, others worse.¹

The comparison with the earlier censuses by the *Liverpool Daily Post* can only be made in the case of churches dating back to those periods, and it should be remembered that the older the church the more is it likely to suffer by the removals from its neighbourhood. Fullest comparison was made in the Everton district, where 17 churches in existence at the four counts—1881, 1891, 1902, and 1908—showed these figures:

PERCENTAGE OF SITTINGS OCCUPIED

		Morning Worship.	Evening Worship.
Church Census of 1881	. .	40¼ per cent.	57¾ per cent.
" " " 1891	. .	31¼ " "	40 " "
" " " 1902	. .	25 " "	42½ " "
" " " 1908	. .	12½ " "	28 " "

Everton is now a typical working-class district, with a population of about 125,000. The older Churches have certainly suffered by removals of old adherents, yet allowing for that, and for the effect of a rainy morning

¹ The Liverpool Free Church census figures are recorded in *The Free Churches and the People*, W. J. Rowland (National Free Church Council. 1s.). Valuable discussions and criticisms of Church methods will be found in this pamphlet.

on the census day, so marked and continuous a decline in the church-going habit remains to be explained.¹

The preceding censuses relate to great English centres of population. An indication of the position in Scotland is afforded by a church-going census taken in Aberdeen on April 2, 1911, by the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*.

The census was limited to the attendants at morning worship, and accordingly is less informative as to the working-class attitude to church-going than were the London and Liverpool figures.

Its results can be compared with those of a similar census taken in Aberdeen ten years before. The figures for 1911 and for 1901 are as follows :

1911.	Total attendance at morning worship	27,166
1901	" " " " "	26,307
	Increase	.859

The weather on the census-Sunday in 1901 was wet and stormy ; on the census-Sunday in 1911 it was fine. The increase of population should also be taken into account ; in 1901 the population of Aberdeen was 153,503, in 1911, 163,084, that is an increase of 9,581. With these facts in view, the census leaves a neutral impression on the mind. Against a slight increase in morning worshippers are to be set as explanatory causes better weather and a larger population.

Two considerations may be added, based on the judgment of careful observers. First, where large congregations are found under normal conditions, *i.e.* apart from the special appeal of revival or anniversary services and the like, one of the following conditions is usually discernible : a preacher of exceptional power or pastoral activity ; a hall in an artisan district

¹ It is fair to add that a voluntary census taken on a fine Sunday shortly after showed about 3 per cent. more of the sittings occupied.

or a district easily accessible from artisan neighbourhoods, well-equipped for social activities as well as for religious assemblies ; a church in a suburb to which there is a steady drift of population ; or a church in a town or village not yet disturbed by the influences which are so rapidly altering life-conditions in the great centres. Second, the activities of the Churches, in church-building, necessary as they have been to provide places of worship in new population-areas, have not led to a corresponding expansion in the spiritual wealth of the Church ; it is not improbable that the expenditure of time and thought on material development has withdrawn energy from directly spiritual ministries.

Deductions from the data respecting church-going.

(1) In Inner London, during the 17 years 1886-1903, the church-going habit declined, chiefly among the adherents of the Established Church.

(2) In Inner and Outer London, in 1902-3, about one-half of the possible church-goers were holding aloof from the churches.

(3) In Liverpool, among the adherents of the Free Churches, the church-going habit steadily weakened during the past generation.

(4) The London and Liverpool figures both show a specially marked dwindling in morning attendance.

(5) Apart from the exceptions mentioned above, there is no substantial reason for thinking that the position in other English towns is much better.

(6) The Aberdeen church-going census suggests that in Scotland the hold of the Church on the people is better maintained.

2. *Loss or Gain in the Sunday school.*—The difficulties of the statistician are evident as soon as Sunday-school figures come under review.

No Roman Catholic returns are available to indicate

the progress or retrogression of Romanist influence on the child-life of Britain. Anglican Sunday-school returns are forthcoming, but, for reasons to be explained, are of limited value to our purpose. Statistics for the Free Churches, however, are complete and strikingly informative.

The Church of England figures given below cover only four years, 1906-7 to 1909-10. The *Official Year-Book of the Church of England*, from which they are extracted, indicates that before 1905-6 a different method of calculation was employed. In respect of the years for which figures are given a prefatory note in the *Year-Book* states :

In the form of Inquiry, the Incumbent is asked to enter all scholars over 15 under Bible Classes, but owing to the fact that all Incumbents are not equally careful to draw the line between Sunday Schools and Bible Classes, uniform registration is rendered somewhat difficult, especially in the Manchester Diocese and in the Welsh Dioceses, where there are numerous adult Sunday Schools. For purposes of comparison, therefore, it is advisable to take the figures for Sunday Schools and Bible Classes together.¹

The movement in or out of the columns of a proportion of scholars over 15 years of age obviously lessens the statistical value of the returns. It will be best to give the Church of England figures first, for completeness' sake, but in view of the uncertainty indicated, to refrain from founding any argument on them.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL SCHOLARS. CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(*English and Welsh Dioceses*)

1906-7.	1907-8.	1908-9.	1909-10.
2,448,193.	2,448,230.	2,494,227.	2,518,918.
	(Inc. 37.)	(Inc. 45,997.)	(Inc. 24,691.)

¹ The returns for Church of England Bible-classes for Men and Women for the years 1906-7 to 1909-10 are as follows :

	Men	Women
1906-7	296,067	278,269
1907-8	322,812	300,309
1908-9	345,297	313,952
1909-10	352,441	324,020

The wide fluctuations in yearly increases—37; 45,997; 24,691—seem to reflect the lack of uniform method in making the returns.

The value of the Sunday-school statistics of the Free Churches is considerable. Apart from the minor inaccuracies of local Sunday-school secretaries—a risk inevitable in voluntary labour—they may be accepted as a fair indication of the fortunes of the schools during the decade beginning 1900-1. The eight largest Free Churches are covered by the returns; hence the field of review is wide and varied. The accompanying tables show that at a definite point, viz. the year 1906-7, there was a general arrest in progress which, with certain exceptions, continued to the end of the decade. The fact that the break in progress comes in the same year in every case but one, proves that common arrestive causes were operating throughout, and, incidentally, reflects the practical accuracy of the returns.

To make the break in progress vivid, the tables are compiled thus:

- (1) *The actual annual increase or decrease is shown in Table A.* The total number of scholars is also given for the opening and closing years of the decade.
- (2) Figures of increase are printed in black type, of decrease in red.

Deductions from the Data respecting Sunday Schools

(1) Statistics of the Sunday schools of the Free Churches from 1900-1 to 1910-11 show the decade to be divided into a period of advance and a period of decline.

(2) 1906-7 was the Break-Year, in which a decline in the number of scholars was reported in seven Free Church denominations.

(3) The decline commencing in 1906-7 continued to the end of the decade.

(4) During the period of advance, from 1900-1 to 1905-6, there was a net increase in the eight Free Church denominations of 231,975 scholars. During the period of decline, from 1906-7 to 1910-11, there was a net decrease in the eight denominations of 127,373 scholars.¹

3. *Loss or Gain in Church Membership.*—The chief difficulty here is the diversity in methods of reckoning Church membership.

The Roman Catholic Church publishes no figures which could serve as an indication of her advance or decline among the British people in the close intimacies of Church fellowship. The Anglican returns show the annual number of confirmations, and of Easter communicants. In the Free Churches methods of enumeration differ widely, as we have noted. It will be well to take the Church of England figures separately, as to neither set is there any parallel in the Free Churches.

The number of confirmations in the Church of England is given below, year by year, for the decade beginning 1901; the number of Easter communicants for the years 1906-10, as the system of basing the return on the total of communicants at the Easter festival began in 1906. The totals are from the *Official Year-Book of the Church of England*.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND. ENGLISH AND WELSH DIOCESES
CONFIRMATIONS

1901	. 220,775	1906	. 224,415 Dec. 6,711
1902	. 207,586 Dec. 13,189	1907	. 229,940 Inc. 5,525
1903	. 226,361 Inc. 18,775	1908	. 237,259 Inc. 7,319
1904	. 218,219 Dec. 8,142	1909	. 243,457 Inc. 6,198
1905	. 231,126 Inc. 12,907	1910	. 236,191 Dec. 7,266

(The 1910 figures for the Diocese of Exeter not being forthcoming, the number of confirmations in the Diocese in the preceding year, 6,200, is included in the 1910 total.)

¹ The Congregationalist and Baptist returns for 1910-11 are not included in this total.

SCHOLARS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS OF THE EIGHT LARGEST FREE CHURCHES

TABLE A

England and Wales only, unless otherwise stated in footnote.

Annual Increases are shown in black type, Annual Decreases in red.

Denomination.	Total for 1900-1.	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1904-5.	1905-6.	1906-7.	1907-8.	1908-9.	1909-10.	1910-11.	Total for 1910-11.	In-crease during 5 Years Ending 1905-6.	De-crease or Increase during 5 Years Ending 1910-11.
Wesleyan Methodists	965,057	6,166	16,445	13,776	5,071	6,876	12,572	10,555	2,311	7,788	3,413	976,752	48,334	36,639
Congregationalists	652,849	14,135	3,780	6,962	11,861	9,255	8,658	13,955	2,628	10,762	*	*668,095	45,993	*30,747
Baptists	516,436	8,632	14,318	11,214	10,458	8,727	4,282	8,761	296	3,089	*	*553,949	53,349	*15,836
Primitive Methodists	439,038	6,016	8,541	8,402	4,157	7,683	3,742	4,369	195	1,710	3,248	460,573	34,799	13,264
United Methodist Calvinistic	311,466	3,472	5,112	3,408	2,746	1,266	11,747	270	1,036	5,308	4,294	305,355	16,004	22,115
Methodists	202,659	3,649	1,434	961	8,359	8,145	845	1,855	1,928	856	1,466	215,389	19,680	6,950
Presbyterians	81,078	889	2,840	2,803	461	1,687	1,149	1,296	226	1,072	379	86,394	8,680	3,364
Society of Friends	16,726	1,167	1,529	628	174	1,638	230	824	76	833	421	23,404	5,136	1,542
Total for Eight Denominations	3,185,309	44,126	51,131	48,154	43,287	45,277	42,765	39,697	2,696	29,752	12,463	3,289,911	231,975	127,373

* 1909-10 is the last return available for the Congregationalist and Baptist denominations.

Note.—The statistical year does not run concurrently in all the denominations: e.g. with the Wesleyan Methodists it is from March Quarter to March Quarter; with the Presbyterians from January to December; hence the column 1910-11 means March 1910-March 1911 re Wesleyan Methodist figures, but January-December 1910 re the Presbyterian. For comparative purposes the above Table represents a near approach to accuracy, but the aforesaid qualification is to be kept in mind.

The Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist figures include schools in Scotland, but the Scottish returns are a very small proportion of the total in each case. In view of these inclusions it is well to state that the Presbyterian figures are for schools in England and Wales only. To the Congregational figures for England and Wales, given in the denominational Year Book are added, for the sake of completeness, those for the Channel Isles: to the Baptist figures for England and Wales, those for the Channel Isles and the Isle of Man.

The "United Methodist" returns for 1900-1 to 1905-6 are the total number of scholars in the three denominations which united in 1907.

TABLE B

MEMBERSHIP IN THE EIGHT LARGEST FREE CHURCHES

England and Wales only, unless otherwise stated in footnote.

Annual Increases are shown in black type, Annual Decreases in red.

Denomination.	Total for 1900-1.	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1904-5.	1905-6.	1906-7.	1907-8.	1908-9.	1909-10.	1910-11.	Total for 1910-11.	Increase during 5 Years Ending 1905-6.	Decrease or In- crease during 5 Years Ending 1910-11.
Wesleyan Methodists	454,982	8,243	4,873	6,055	10,726	13,585	2,034	4,424	1,144	2,299	3,028	485,535	43,482	12,929
Congregation- alists	403,711	10,507	4,248	7,144	15,634	18,694	45	503	2,535	2,135	*	*454,810	56,227	*5,128
Baptists	353,083	3,983	9,723	5,543	30,596	7,338	5,011	5,407	2,036	3,564	*	*394,748	57,683	*16,018
Primitive Methodists	188,922	3,086	2,600	2,428	4,297	4,074	1,248	379	335	566	1,047	205,086	16,485	321
United Methodists	133,207	3,708	1,555	2,492	4,157	3,225	644	764	377	1,132	1,827	144,888	15,137	3,456
Calvinistic Methodists	158,114	2,219	1,951	2,934	8,092	15,854	1,396	1,833	569	898	700	183,858	31,050	5,306
Presbyterians	76,071	1,966	1,583	1,935	1,558	2,102	540	19	647	387	20	86,828	9,144	1,613
Society of Friends	17,346	130	141	83	96	114	209	182	167	218	154	18,840	564	930
Total for Eight Denomina- tions	1,785,436	33,842	26,674	28,614	75,156	65,486	5,755	12,351	6,182	9,899	6,423	1,974,593	229,772	40,615

* As in Table A, 1909-10 is the last return available for the Congregational and Baptist denominations.

Note.—The statistical year does not run concurrently in all the denominations: e.g. with the Wesleyan Methodists it is from March Quarter to March Quarter; with the Presbyterian from January to December. Hence the column 1910-11 means March 1910-March 1911, re Wesleyan Methodist figures, but January-December 1910 re the Presbyterian. For comparative purposes the above Table represents a near approach to accuracy, but the aforesaid qualification is to be kept in mind.

The Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist figures include Churches in Scotland, but the Scottish returns are a very small proportion of the total in each case. In view of these inclusions it is well to state that the Presbyterian figures are for Churches in England and Wales only. To the Congregational figures for England and Wales given in the denominational Year Book are added for the sake of completeness those for the Channel Isles; and to the Baptist figures for England and Wales those for the Channel Isles and the Isle of Man.

Members "on trial," i.e. probationary members, are not included in the totals for the various Methodist Churches.

The "United Methodist" returns for 1900-1 to 1905-6 are the total number of church members in the three denominations which united in 1907.

COMMUNICANTS AT EASTER

There are no returns prior to 1905-6

1905-6	1906-7	1907-8	1908-9	1909-10
2,053,455.	2,103,902.	2,142,039.	2,231,753	2,283,044
	Inc. 50,447	Inc. 38,137.	Inc. 89,714.	Inc. 51,291

The figures are curiously inconclusive. In the first half of the decade the number of confirmations rose and fell in alternate years; 1907-8-9 were years of increase; 1910 recorded a decrease. The steady increase in the number of Easter communicants probably reflects the enhanced importance attached in recent years to the requirement of the Book of Common Prayer that "every parishioner shall communicate at least three times in the year, *of which Easter to be one.*"

The claim of the Church of England to recognition as the National Church suggests a comparison between the increase in the number of confirmations during the past decade, and the advance of population.

Population of England and Wales.		Confirmations.
1901	32,527,843	220,775
1911	36,075,269	(1910) 236,191

The population increased 10·9 per cent. in 10 years; confirmations 7 per cent. in 9 years.

Passing to the Free Churches we find the methods of estimating Church membership differing widely (see p. 17). Statistics for the decade 1901-11, from the eight largest Free Church denominations, are given in Table B. (The Salvation Army publish no statistics of membership, nor do the different groups of "Brethren.") The returns are from the denominational Year-Books. Figures in black type indicate increase, in red type decrease, as in Table A.

Deductions from the Data respecting Church Membership.

(1) In the Church of England confirmations increased from 220,775 in 1901 to 236,191 in 1910. That was an increase of 7 per cent. in 9 years; the population of England and Wales increased 10·9 per cent. in the 10 years 1901-11.

(2) In the eight largest Free Churches membership increased from 1,785,436 in 1901 to 1,974,593 in 1911. That was an increase of 10·6 per cent. as compared with an increase in the population of 10·9 per cent. during the same period.

(3) Unhappily, in the Free Churches the decade is sharply divided into a period of advance, from 1900-1 to 1905-6, and a period of decline from 1906-7 to 1910-11. The only exceptions are the Presbyterians and the Society of Friends.

(4) During the period of advance, from 1900-1 to 1905-6, there was a net increase in the eight Free Church denominations of 229,772 members. During the period of decline, from 1906-7 to 1910-11 there was a net decrease in the eight denominations of 40,615 members.¹

(5) Both Free Church Tables, that of Sunday-school scholars (A), and that of Church membership (B), show the same Break-Year, viz. 1906-7; and the record of subsequent decline is significantly the same.

IV. 1906-7 WAS THE BREAK-YEAR: WHY?

Church-going declines, especially at morning worship. Free Church figures—which furnish the surest data—indicate decrease in Sunday-school scholars and Church members. Up to 1905-6 all Free Church denominations

¹ The Congregationalist and Baptist returns for 1910-11 are not included in this total.

reported progress. 1906-7 *was the Break-year*, in which a decline continuing to 1910-11 set in. Why?

We may rule out local denominational reasons as a *sufficient* explanation. In Wesleyan Methodism, the wisdom or unwisdom of retaining the Class-meeting as a test of membership has been so keenly debated that Church membership may have been adversely affected. The isolation of the Independent Churches, Congregational and Baptist, and the resulting weakness of their smaller causes, arouses discussion and leads to proposals for some measure of Connexionalism. The United Methodist Church found that rearrangements involved in union shook off some loosely attached members. It is also likely that the undenominational character of many Brotherhoods has lessened the likelihood of their best recruits becoming Church members.

But these are insufficient explanations. The Churches have always had unsettling questions of one kind or another to face. Moreover, these explanations do not touch the decay of the church-going habit, nor do they explain why 1906-7 was so conspicuously the Break-Year. To find the root-reasons for decline we must note what movements of thought likely to affect Free Churches, and to affect most of them, were stirring the public mind. What was happening in the period immediately preceding the Break-Year which was likely to affect the fortunes of the Churches? Two events loom large. First, the Welsh Revival of 1904-5, and the reaction which followed it. Second, the Social Uprising, which led to the overthrow of the Ministry of Mr. Balfour, the return to power in 1906 of a Radical Government supported by an unparalleled Parliamentary majority, and the presence in the House of Commons of an organised Labour Party.

1. *Reaction after the Welsh Revival of 1904-5.*—It was in November 1904 that the revival movement

first attracted public notice. From Loughor in Glamorganshire its fervour passed through the Welsh counties. In England the centres of population nearest Wales—Liverpool and Bristol—were most deeply stirred; but Church life everywhere revealed a new intensity. 1905 and 1906 were years of ingathering. Then followed a reaction, and the years of decline began. The figures of Church membership given below are for two years before the Revival affected membership (1903–4), two years of Revival influence (1905–6), and the two years immediately following. They concern the four Free Churches most widely represented in Wales, and relate only to Wales and Monmouth and a few Welsh-speaking churches in England. They illustrate graphically the rush of the tide and its partial receding.

Denomination	BEFORE THE REVIVAL		REVIVAL YEARS		AFTER THE RE- VIVAL	
	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
Calvinistic Methodists	162,284	165,218 Inc. 2,934	173,310 Inc. 8,092	189,164 Inc. 15,854	187,768 Dec. 1,396	185,935 Dec. 1,833
Congrega- tionalists	146,225	148,780 Inc. 2,555	162,270 Inc. 13,490	174,313 Inc. 12,043	171,371 Dec. 2,942	168,045 Dec. 3,326
Baptists	113,597	116,310 Inc. 2,713	140,443 Inc. 24,133	143,584 Inc. 3,141	137,507 Dec. 6,077	133,287 Dec. 4,220
Wesleyan Methodists ¹	35,043	36,000 Inc. 957	40,957 Inc. 4,957	41,860 Inc. 903	41,001 Dec. 859	40,143 Dec. 858

The figures do not warrant the assumption that all the ground won in 1905–6 was afterward lost. The inconstant were only a fraction of those received into Church fellowship. Had a reasonably long probation been generally observed before admission into full membership the later depletion of the ranks would have been less serious. There was a reaction; the decrease in all the four denominations in 1907–8 demonstrates

¹ The Wesleyan Methodist returns include the figures for the Cardiff and Swansea District (English work), as well as for the purely Welsh Districts.

that. Still, taking the figures as they stand, it remains true that thousands who professed conversion made their profession good in honourable living. "A fair acquaintance with every district in Wales, and a balancing of loss and gain," wrote a competent observer—the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis, M.A.—at the close of 1907, "give one the conviction that the gain has been incalculable. Thousands of young people were awakened and retain their earnestness. There has been no time within living memory when larger or more attentive congregations throng to those special services for the preaching of the Gospel which have been so marked a feature of Welsh religious life."

Yet the decline continued. The Welsh Revival has passed into history, but the falling away is still evident in Wales and throughout England, generally speaking. Another cause, of wider influence, and more deeply rooted in the soil of British life, must be sought.

2. *The Social Uprising*.—Before entering upon a discussion of the influence of the Social Uprising on the Churches, it is needful to recall the theological unrest prevailing throughout the period under review. As the results of a century of critical study of the Bible and of Christian doctrine became more widely known, from the pulpit and through the press, dogmas accepted unquestioningly by earlier generations were seen to be untenable. They had lost authority over a large section of the Church-going public. The inerrancy of the Scriptures, and material conceptions of heaven and hell, are examples of discarded beliefs; but over the whole range of theology—the meaning of sin and salvation, the significance of Jesus the Christ and of the Kingdom of God He proclaimed, the destiny of man beyond death—speculation roamed far and wide. It was, and still is, a transitional age. An old order of thought is challenged; we are feeling our way to new modes of comprehending God and human life.

Suddenly, at the end of 1906—the date demands notice—the general unrest drew to a head in the “New Theology” controversy. The Rev. R. J. Campbell’s frank assertion of advanced theological positions became the storm-centre. One may safely say that, for some months following, theology was debated more generally and vigorously in England and Wales than for many a decade past. The later developments, such as the formation of the League of Progressive Thought and Social Service, afterward renamed the Liberal Christian League, are well known, and lie beyond the immediate area of our discussion.

The effect of the controversy on Church-going and Church-membership is peculiarly difficult to estimate. On the one side, it is urged that to the lay mind the disputation emphasised uncertainty in matters of religious belief, and so tended to weaken attachment to the Churches. A reasonable reply would be that the New Theologians saw that the hold of the Church on modern life was slackening perilously, to the great loss of the nation; that restatement of religious belief was vitally necessary if spiritual religion was to regain ascendancy; and that the advance of the New Theology—or Liberal Christian—Movement has witnessed the building up of large and earnest congregations under the ministry of its leading preachers.

A fairer way to apprehend the situation will be to recognise that the movement was closely related to the Social Uprising, which it quickly succeeded, and was indeed its corresponding expression in the realm of religious thought. A quotation from Mr. Campbell’s “New Theology” sermons will make this clear.

The great social movement which is now taking place in every country of the civilised world towards universal peace and brotherhood, and a better and fairer distribution of wealth, is really the same movement as that which, in the more distinctly religious sphere, is coming to be called the New Theology. This fact needs to be realised and brought out. . . .

The New Theology is but the religious articulation of the social movement. The word "theology" is almost a misnomer; it is essentially a moral and spiritual movement; the recognition that we are at the beginning of a great religious and ethical awakening, the ultimate results of which no man can completely foresee.¹

In face of this fact it will be advisable to pass on at once to consider the Social Uprising, the economic, religious, and ecclesiastical aspects of which are the chief concern of these pages.

Beyond question, future historians will regard the General Election of January 1906 as an event of unwaning importance. On a full discussion of the causes of that democratic upheaval we enter later. Here it suffices to say that behind the Social Uprising of 1906 was a long and pregnant history. The manual labourers' chronic discontent with their meagre, sordid lot, the working of the leaven of Socialism, the formation of the Independent Labour Party in 1892-3, and of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, the growing power of federated capital and its triumph over Trade Unionism, and the resentment against the House of Lords' decision in the Taff Vale Railway case in 1901, all played their part.

What happened in 1906 was this. Labour, organised and ready for the fight, took the field, and won entrance into Parliament as an independent party, soon fifty strong, determined to reshape the political and industrial order, so that justice should be done to the workers. Labour's electoral victory profoundly affected the attitude and action of the working-classes throughout the country. The Age of Hope had dawned for them. The new crusade of social redress kindled imagination and claimed their service. Old institutions were judged by their conformity or nonconformity to the new social ideal of the workers. The Church could not remain untouched by the spirit of the times.

¹ Pp. 14-15.

Mr. Elvet Lewis, in the 1907 article already quoted, went on to say: "What confuses the estimate (of the future of the Welsh Free Churches) is the new social movement of Labour. Will it tend, ultimately, to the weakening of the Churches?" Far-seeing men were asking the same question concerning the Churches in England. In the few crowded years which have followed, reasons for anxiety have multiplied. Labour, and the time-honoured institutions of organised Christianity, have drifted farther apart. Working-men, infused with passion for justice and brotherhood, believed that the Church as a whole acquiesced in the existing industrial order, unjust in the extreme as they held it to be; and as for brotherhood, it seemed to them that though the Bible taught that God is no respecter of persons, the Church was overrun with class distinctions, and men were honoured within her walls in proportion to their purses. Little as quiet Christian folk will like this statement, it is time to be frank. Rightly or wrongly, these things were commonly said and believed in the working-class quarters of the great towns, and have had more to do with the decline in church-going, in the number of Sunday-school scholars and of Church members, than many imagine.

This does not mean that Democracy rejects Jesus. The reverse is true. Reverence for Jesus probably characterises a larger proportion of Labour leaders than at any former period in British industrial history. By way of illustration let a critical reader peruse the ten addresses delivered in Labour Week, 1910, on "Labour and Religion,"¹ by recognised leaders of British Labour. The Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movements are the most notable proofs of all. It was not against Christ, but against the Church *as the Church was conceived to be*, that working-class feeling revolted. "We are out against Capitalism. The Church favours Capitalism, and only patronises the working-man.

¹ *Labour and Religion*, W. A. Hammond.

Therefore we are against the Church." So ran, so runs—though not quite so bitterly, for the Christian Social Movement is beginning to influence opinion—the argument at the street corner and in the workshop. This is the chief cause of the *malaise* which has smitten the Church in the industrial centres; and it is in the industrial centres that the weakness of the Church, apart from the Central Missions, is most apparent to-day.

Yorkshire affords the most telling example. The county is historic in the annals of Methodism. Its great manufacturing towns have been the scene of some of Methodism's mightiest ministries and campaigns of evangelism. In Yorkshire also Labour propaganda was, and is, unceasing. The Social Uprising of 1906 was like a high tide of democratic enthusiasm in the great Northern shire. The accompanying table gives the membership returns of the Wesleyan Methodist Church for the six Yorkshire Districts, the years chosen being 1901, 1906—the year of the Social Uprising—and 1911.

WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN YORKSHIRE
IN 1901, 1906, AND 1911

District	1901	1906		1911	
Halifax and Bradford .	20,939	21,691	752 Inc.	21,270	421 Dec.
Leeds . .	22,110	22,601	491 Inc.	20,360	2,241 Dec.
Sheffield .	14,934	17,144	2,210 Inc.	16,423	721 Dec.
Hull . .	16,540	16,289	251 Dec.	15,224	1,065 Dec.
York . .	12,895	12,807	88 Dec.	11,465	1,342 Dec.
Whitby and Darlington	13,259	13,982	723 Inc.	13,512	470 Dec.
	100,677	104,514	3,837 Net Inc.	98,254	6,260 Net Dec.

Between the censuses of 1901 and 1911 the population of Yorkshire increased 372,826, or 10·3 per cent. During the first half of the decade, from 1901 to 1906, Wesleyan Methodist Church membership in Yorkshire Districts increased 3,837, or 3·8 per cent.; during

the second half of the decade, from 1906—the year of the Social Uprising—to 1911, it *decreased* 6,260, or 5·9 per cent. *Notwithstanding the notable successes won at the Wesleyan Methodist Central Missions in certain of the Yorkshire towns, and in the face of a steadily increasing population, Wesleyan Methodist Church membership in Yorkshire receded during the five years, 1906–11, nearly six per cent.*¹

Yorkshire is the most conspicuous example of the decline of Church life in manufacturing areas; but on a less extensive scale parallel instances could be cited from other Northern counties, the Midlands, and the West.

In the misunderstanding—the word is used advisedly—in the misunderstanding between aroused Democracy and the Church is to be recognised a chief cause of Church decline operating over wide areas of British life, and still banefully active. It behoves lovers of the Church and the People patiently to study the present grave situation, and the history which preceded it.

V. NEWER EXPRESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN CONVICTION

Turning from the familiar forms of Church organisation, morning and evening services in “Church hours,” the Sunday school, and the enrolment of Church members, it is necessary to notice newer expressions of Christian conviction which win the assent and support of large bodies of working-people to-day—the Adult School, the P.S.A., the Brotherhood, the Sisterhood, and kindred movements.

To the student of the religious life of the British people these all take their place as tokens of the Re-birth of Social Consciousness in the realm of religious aspiration. A man may enter a Church at the hour of

¹ Some of the “Districts” cross the Yorkshire border; so parts of South Durham, North Derbyshire, and North Lincolnshire are included in the area represented by the membership returns.

public worship unconscious of a necessary association with the other individuals who form the congregation, many of whom regularly occupy rented pews, into which custom restrains him from going; the same man entering a Brotherhood meeting is shown by its homely ritual that he is not regarded simply as a unit, but as one of a neighbourly unity. The hand-clasp at the door as he comes and goes, freedom to sit where he will and with whom he will, the fraternal greeting of men at his side, the unconventional directness of the address, and its close grappling with the evils of daily life, the applause which greets a telling point, make him feel that "this kind of religion" is right for him. The distinction is that between a formal assembly for worship, and worship in which formality—as commonly understood—is felt to be out of place.

1. *The Adult School Movement*.—Of these newer expressions of the Social Consciousness in the realm of religion, that with the longest history is the Adult School Movement. Its full story can be read in *A History of the Adult School Movement*, by J. W. Rowntree and H. B. Binns.¹ "Unwashed laziness lounging in narrow streets, troops of boys making mischief with trees, hedgerows, and fences, or playing at 'pitch and hustle' in the outskirts" were the Sunday sights which roused Joseph Sturge, a well-known Birmingham Quaker, in 1845, to experiment with a new method. His model was an Adult School in Nottingham which had succeeded in the very task Sturge had in view. The first difficulties overpast, the School he founded in Severn Street, Birmingham—which was destined to become the nucleus of a great movement—settled to work of this order: meeting at half-past seven on Sunday mornings, the first hour was given to instruction in writing; then a chapter of the Bible was read aloud, and it became the basis for lessons in reading and moral conduct.

¹ Published by Headley Bros. 1903.

In a Men's Adult School to-day the distinctive features are: (1) a meeting of working-men in the early hours of Sunday morning; (2) an address on a subject of educational value, historical, sociological, or scientific; (3) then the division of the School into classes for the Bible lesson, in which teacher and adult scholar by the Socratic method of question and answer draw out the moral worth of the passage; and (4) the association with the School of institutions for mutual aid and recreation—Savings Fund, Sick Society or Benevolent Fund, Library and Literary Society, Social Club, Athletic Clubs, and so forth. Owing much to the Society of Friends, which has given unstinted service to the Adult Schools, the Movement is none the less undenominational. The place of meeting may be a Council school, a room on Church premises, or, in a few cases, property acquired or erected by the School itself. As to politics, the Adult School, like the other Movements to be described, is non-party-political, but in its classes and on its platforms the ethics of Christianity are applied with the utmost frankness to the economics of the day. "The basis of an Adult School is the practical teaching of Jesus Christ. . . . The free, but reverent and practical study of the Bible, conducted in common with full opportunity for discussion, is deemed the centre of the School work. . . . The only qualification for membership is a wish to join the School. The members of a School may belong to any denomination or to none."¹ Women's Adult Schools have also met with considerable success. In 1910 the total membership of Adult Schools was 110,686. The Movement is strongest in the Midlands.

2. *The P.S.A., Brotherhood, Sisterhood, and Kindred Movements.*—The "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" also originated in the Midlands, as an offshoot from the Adult School Movement. Mr. John Blackham, a Con-

¹ *Adult Schools, their Aims and Methods.*

gregationalist and Adult School Worker, in 1875 inaugurated "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons" in West Bromwich. Moody and Sankey's mission in Birmingham in that year suggested to him the holding of a popular service on Sunday afternoons, intended especially for young people who had lapsed from Sunday school and Church. His success led to the wider adoption of his plan. The neighbouring Black Country towns quickly imitated the West Bromwich model. Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester followed suit. The Northern counties welcomed the New Movement. In a few years the P.S.A. had struck root in most industrial neighbourhoods.

The Brotherhood and the Sisterhood, the strongest and most rapidly growing of this group of new Christian movements, have developed alongside the P.S.A. in recent years.

Like the Adult School, and as its name implies, the Brotherhood is a gathering of men as "brothers"; like the P.S.A., its normal time of assembly is Sunday afternoon. Its power of appeal to working-men, especially to skilled artisans, is unquestionable. Brotherhoods with an average attendance of several hundreds are frequent. The success of a Brotherhood depends to a considerable extent on the wise choice of speakers. The word "practical," repeated in the sentences culled from the *Aims* of the Adult School, best expresses the attitude of the men to the message. They expect a message, the telling of something which the speaker believes with all his heart and told with all his heart, something "practical" which will make them better and their mates better and the world better. Platitudes, theological discussions only remotely related to common life, leave them cold, and a repetition of addresses of that type soon shatters attendance. For Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth and Humanity's Saviour, and for His teachings, Brotherhood men have deepest reverence. The speaker who would win their

heartily assent must show how modern life has drifted away from Jesus ; how society would be revolutionised were the principles of the Sermon on the Mount and of the parables and the sayings of our Lord applied ; and how each man can make his contribution to the coming Christian social order by allegiance to Jesus. The type of man one sees by hundreds at Labour and Socialist mass meetings, reflective, enthusiastic, capable of good work in Humanity's cause, is predominant in many a Brotherhood ; and—this is surely another encouraging augury—many of the Labour leaders to whom he listens as they discuss economic questions in public halls are also frequent and welcome speakers at the great Brotherhoods, where they urge the supreme worth of character and the sovereign claims of Christ.

The ancillary Clubs for mutual help in distress, and for mental and physical recreation, mentioned in connection with the Adult School, are also associated with the Brotherhood.

Like the Adult School, the Brotherhood is democratic in its form of government ; far more frequently than with the Adult School the place of meeting is on Church premises ; indeed this is usually the case. Where the attitude of the Church is thoroughly sympathetic, the Brotherhood is often organically related to the Church on whose premises it assembles, and men pass through its influence into actual Church membership. In the smaller towns one Brotherhood may serve the whole community, and there its organisation will be expressly inter- or undenominational ; the Brotherhood described below is of that type. In general it is true to say that the attitude of the local minister or ministers, and of the Church officers, determines the relation of the Movement to the Church. A minister whose gift of speech and sympathy with democratic ideals make him a frequent and welcome speaker to the Brotherhood, may have through its meetings a way of Christian appeal to a larger public than the

ordinary services of his Church provide, and may make the Movement of great service to his Church.

The P.S.A. Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movements are united under the guidance of the National Council of P.S.A. Brotherhoods. It is computed that between half and three-quarters of a million men assemble in the Brotherhoods and kindred societies of the United Kingdom Sunday by Sunday.

Complementary to the Brotherhood, as the newest expression of Christian conviction among working-men, is the Sisterhood, expressive of similar convictions among working-women. Sisterhoods usually assemble on a week-evening—an hour's meeting on Monday nights is a frequent arrangement. With the necessary changes almost everything said of the Brotherhood is true of the Sisterhood. Its success is on quite as large a scale where the Movement has gained a footing; and a very rapid development of its work is probable.

Better than any further general description of the two Movements will be a sketch of a Brotherhood and a Sisterhood actually at work. The concise and vivid statements which follow are furnished by the responsible officers of the organisations concerned.

B—— is a Midland town with about 10,000 inhabitants. Its chief industries are market-gardening, nail-making, and the manufacture of railway wagons, and there are also boot, clothing, and other factories. The population therefore comprises a large number of skilled artisans. As is only too often the case, at least in recent years, B——, like other industrial towns, has not been remarkably enthusiastic in matters religious. A large proportion of the population has contentedly remained outside the churches.

The Brotherhood and Sisterhood movements have had their great success in that they have gathered in non-church-goers by scores. The effect upon family life has been very marked. Husbands who have not for years had their midday Sunday meal with their families have abandoned the public-house, and are found on Sundays in their own homes, joining their wives and children at

the dinner-table. Although it is to their own financial loss, publicans frankly acknowledge the attraction of the Brotherhood services. The district nurses, as well as the wives of our members testify to the altered condition of the homes. The effect upon the regular religious services of the churches would not give satisfaction to an adverse critic; in one church the number of fresh attendants at the services, especially in the evening, has been very gratifying.

THE BROTHERHOOD

The Brotherhood in this town meets in the Wesleyan Chapel on Sunday afternoons from 3.15 to 4.15. It is inter-denominational in its working. At the outset ministers and lay-workers of all denominations were invited to co-operate. The response was most satisfactory. In the actual constitution of the Brotherhood, each of the co-operating churches provided a vice-president, and the workers are drawn from all the denominations. The movement is self-supporting; a weekly collection meets the current expenses, which include a reasonable rental paid to the chapel trustees. A Helping-hand Committee is held at the close of each Brotherhood service, to discuss cases of distress amongst the members, and to vote assistance according to its discretion.

The services are of a distinctly religious character throughout. An orchestral band of Brotherhood members, numbering about twenty, leads the singing, and contributes occasional selections. The Brotherhood is its own choir, and a splendid choir it is. We use the Fellowship Hymn Book. We have been very fortunate in securing the help of speakers and soloists, who in every case have rendered voluntary service, receiving only their out-of-pocket expenses, many even declining to accept these. The speakers are not announced in advance, but at the same time the greatest care is taken to obtain men who have something uplifting to say, and who know how to say it. It has been sometimes necessary to go far afield to secure the right man, and this course has been amply justified. Party-political questions are strictly tabooed, but the religious aspect of serious social questions is dealt with and commands the approval of the men. Applause is permitted, and often punctuates the telling points of the speaker.

The present membership of the Brotherhood is 754, and the average attendance is about 600. A man's attend-

ance card is marked as he enters, and he pays a penny a week towards the book-prize fund. Each half year there is a distribution of book-prizes, and there is great keenness to qualify for a first prize, which is awarded only to men who have an unbroken record of attendance (absence through sickness or duty not disqualifying). Over two-thirds of the members received books at the last distribution, the choice being made by each member from a list compiled by a Committee of the Brotherhood. Visitation of the absent members is systematically practised. A Visitation Committee, thirty strong, is responsible for looking up absentee members who have missed two successive services.

THE SISTERHOOD

“The Brotherhood for the women is the Sisterhood.” The Brotherhood in B—— had not been in existence many weeks before the persistent demand of the women compelled the organisation of a movement to do for them what the Brotherhood was doing for the men. The success of the Sisterhood has been phenomenal. At the opening service over 500 members were enrolled, this number increasing to over 700 in a few weeks. The average attendance is almost as large as that of the Brotherhood. What has already been said of the organisation and services of the Brotherhood applies, with the necessary modifications, to the working of the Sisterhood. The Sisterhood meets in the same chapel, on Monday evenings, from 7.45 to 8.45. Many of the women are wives of the Brotherhood members, and are to a large extent engaged in the local industries of nail-making, boot and clothing manufacture, and market-gardening.

The influence of the two movements in the town of B—— may be seen in the fact that nearly a third of the adult population is included in the membership of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood.

One other feature of the Brotherhood Movement commands attention. It is developing a foreign campaign which may have far-reaching results. It is a commonplace of knowledge that the gulf between Democracy and the Churches is wider in Continental countries than in the United Kingdom. There are historic reasons for this. The hierarchical policy of

the Roman Catholic Church, its love of wealth and temporal power, and its support in the main of the social system against which the workers are in revolt, have roused the masses to derision where the Church has lost power to rule as in France, and to an active hostility where the Church still intrigues and dictates as in Belgium. The case is little better, in some quarters, as between the Protestant Churches and the Democracy.

The British Brotherhood Movement has declared for an international policy. What no other organisation could possibly do, its leaders are attempting. They aim at Christianising the unchurched democracies of the Continent.

Three organised visits to the Continent have already been paid. In 1908 one hundred and sixty Brotherhood members crossed to Paris, and at a mass meeting the Brotherhood Movement was explained to the working-men of the French capital. At Whitsuntide 1909 a large party visited Belgium, and at Brussels and Charleroi great propagandist meetings were held. A year later the industrial areas of the North of France and East of Belgium were selected, and at Lille a demonstration was held with such remarkable results as to arouse the hope that a Christian Brotherhood Movement will ultimately influence the democracies of the Continent as powerfully as it already impresses working-class life in Britain. At Lille "the most remarkable pronouncement of the day was the speech of Mr. Keir Hardie. . . . He is well known on the Continent, and met with a most hearty reception. The difficulty of the task before him will be appreciated by those who know the condition of thought among the working-classes in France. It is mainly materialistic, agnostic, or atheist." Mr. Keir Hardie defined the Brotherhood as "an association for the promotion of fellowship among all those who love Jesus. He declared that the impetus which directed

him to his life's work, and the inspiration which has carried him on in it, have been derived more from the teachings of Jesus Christ than from all other sources combined. Labour men, he said, cannot afford, even if they were inclined, to neglect Christianity. . . . Christianity represents sacrifice, having its origin in love ; and the Christian who professes the Christian faith is thereby under obligation to make whatever sacrifice may be necessary in order to remove sin, suffering, and injustice from the lives of those around him." ¹ Brave, frank words like these from a leader of International Democracy of Mr. Keir Hardie's standing have an immense effect. What proportions this missionary campaigning may assume in the future, what wealthy consequences may flow from it, none can foresee. It is conceivable and possible that great gains will accrue to the cause of international peace and good-will, and that continental democracy will display a new responsiveness to the spirit and ideals of Christ.

3. *The Leaven of Christian Conviction in Public Life.* Britain grows better. "Never was the cause of righteousness less a lost cause than it is to-day. Side by side with apparent religious indifference there grows a profound dissatisfaction with the social order as it exists." ² The nation is heedful to the cry for justice, more careful of its treasure of child-life, more temperate.

The national drink bill fell from £184,881,196 in 1900 to £157,604,658 in 1910 ; the *per capita* expenditure on drink from £4 10s. 4½d. in 1900 to £3 9s. 3½d. in 1910 ; advance in sobriety is matter of common observation. Contrast also the war passions of 1899-1902, the dark years of the South African struggle, with the enthusiastic response to the Taft-Grey proposal for an Arbitration Treaty between the United Kingdom and the United States. Take the Old Age

¹ Ward, *Brotherhood and Democracy*, pp. 109-110.

² Peile, *Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 18.

Pensions Act as a type of the legislative answer to the demand that the nation should bear the burdens of its frailest citizens. Given a generation undistracted by war, and a social conscience as informed as it is alert, the Britain our children's children know will be vastly richer in moral wealth and social grace than the Britain of this hour.

VI. THE CHURCH'S PRESENT PROBLEM

To sum up : the Church is confronted by a paradox. Within her borders, loss ; beyond her borders, gain for the Kingdom of God. Church-going and Sunday-school attendance and Church membership, the time-honoured expressions of Christian conviction, at present decline. Where Christian conviction registers advance it is along newer lines, in the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement, and in the arousal of a social conscience in public affairs. Church-going in the great towns appears to have fallen off steadily during the past quarter of a century ; that is the moral of the London and Liverpool figures. The broadening of life—the multiplication of its interests—explains in part the gradual relaxing of the Church's grip. With almost dramatic precision our "Tables" show when the slow decline darkened into a crisis. 1906-7 was the Break-year. In the Welsh revival of 1904-5 the Church's flagging energies were quickened but not abidingly ; the fall in Sunday-school and Church membership returns dates from the exhaustion of revival intensity ; yet the continued decline indicates a more potent and general cause than reaction from revival influence.

Setting the reverse in the Church's fortunes against the background of the times, we find the crisis within the Church to be contemporaneous with the Social Uprising. In the General Election of 1906 Democracy, organised and independent, won its first extended electoral campaign. From 1906 onward, Labour, proclaiming its independence in the political world, has

taken a similar attitude in other realms of life. Toward all institutions claiming the support of the workers its position has been, and is, this : Do your aims and your practice accord or disaccord with the democratic ideal of social justice and brotherhood ? Unhappily for the Church the verdict has often gone against her. It ought not to have been so ; justice and brotherhood are Christian conceptions, as Democracy recognises ; but Church practice and Christian conceptions unfortunately do not always harmonise. The widespread belief that the Church does not preach a full Evangel, social as well as personal in its application, and that she condones, if not actually sanctions, an anti-social way of life in her members, mainly accounts for the shrinkage of Church membership in Yorkshire and other industrial areas.

Such in clear outline is the problem. In the past few years, speaking generally, organised Christianity and organised Democracy have drifted farther apart. This not because democratic ideas are inconsistent with Christianity ; we shall see that the reverse is truer, Christianity can endorse them. Nor because Democracy is anti-Christian ; the rise of the Brotherhood Movement, the frank advocacy of Christian truth by many British Labour leaders, and the strong hold which the Sunday school still has on working-class homes establish the contrary. The most urgent task of the Christian thinker is to track out the causes of this fateful misunderstanding, and of the Christian Church to reverse them.

One other consideration gives point to this contention. "Democracy," the word glides glibly from lip or pen ; whom do we mean by "Democracy"—this working-class from whom the Church is so considerably estranged ? Mr. Chiozza Money, in an elaborate discussion on "The Distribution of the National Income,"¹ deduces from the data available the following

¹ *Riches and Poverty* (tenth and revised edition), p. 48.

economic grouping of the people of the United Kingdom in the year 1908:

THE RICH,

i.e. persons with incomes of £700 and upwards per annum, number with their families 1,400,000

THE COMFORTABLE,

i.e. persons with incomes between £160 and £700 per annum, number with their families 4,100,000

THE POOR,

i.e. persons with incomes less than £160 per annum, number with their families 39,100,000

One might put the poverty line higher in many cases, for in how many families where the income exceeds £160 is the struggle to live fierce and relentless? Also the term "democratic" may be justly held to apply to conviction rather than circumstance; there are men and women of the "Comfortable Class" more truly democratic in faith and outlook than many of "The Poor." But take the grouping suggested as a fair estimate of those whose life-conditions predispose them to take the point of view customary in the world of organised Labour. These, then, are the proportions. The Rich number a little over 3 per cent. of the nation, the Comfortable a little over 9 per cent., *the Poor over 87 per cent.*

Class-groupings ought not to affect the Church's attitude to men—that is the basal argument of this book. The souls of all men, rich and poor, are her solemn burden. But the figures have this tremendous significance. If a spirit of alienation from the Church traverses the vast mass of Humanity within the frontier of economic insecurity, touching with varying degrees of conviction multitudes of those who in their totality represent eight-ninths of the nation, small surprise that all over the country the hold of the Church on the life of the people slackens. The imminent need of the hour is the removal of misunderstanding between the Church and Democracy. The existing situation is tragic.

If the preceding argument is valid the next steps in investigation are plain. Understanding is the remedy for misunderstanding. On the side of the Church there should be, first of all, a patient attempt to understand Democracy, and the key to knowledge here is history. The history to be carefully surveyed is that which lies behind the Social Uprising, and which alone explains the attitude of Democracy to-day. The second step will be a re-study of the origins of the Church to discover the content of the Christian Gospel in the Primitive Age, and the scope of the original Christian Mission. Given these, (1) a sympathetic knowledge of the rise of British Democracy, and of its ideals, and (2) a fresh-won conception of the Church's duty, then the problem of the reconciliation of Democracy and the Church need not remain insoluble, but becomes on the part of the Church one of obedience to a clearer vision and of practical wisdom in ministering to the needs of the New Age.

We therefore pass to a careful study of the Labour Movement. The period under review is from the later decades of the eighteenth century to the present time. It is important to note that this stretch of British history is examined from the industrial standpoint. That means that many events which loom large in general history scarcely call for comment here ; only indirectly did they touch the fortunes of the labouring class. It also means that incidents inconspicuous in general history become momentous in our record. Take the opening years of the last century. Trafalgar, the Retreat from Moscow, and Waterloo are unnamed, or only named, in these pages ; but the War Taxes, the New Poor Law, and the fight against the Combination Acts are of first importance. It is industrial history, the chronicles of the sorrows and struggles of the poor. It is written with the present distresses of the poor in view, and written, need it be said, with unfeigned sympathy. To have lived in thought with Chartists

and the pioneers of the new Trade Unionism, with the first Co-operators and the advance-guard of the Socialist army, has been to feel that—

Here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

This is the attitude and method necessary to the understanding of modern democratic aspirations. What follows is industrial history, but *history* from first to last, a statement of facts familiar and unfamiliar, essential to a true understanding of the Democracy which, alert and critical, now confronts the Church.

“We search the records of the past of mankind in order that we may learn wisdom for the present, and hope for the future. We wish to discover tendencies which are permanent, ideas which promise to be fruitful, conceptions by which we may judge the course most likely to secure abiding results.”¹

¹ The late Bishop Creighton, *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. p. 4.

SECTION II

DEMOCRACY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

There shall come from out this noise of strife and groaning
A broader and a juster brotherhood,
A deep equality of aim, postponing
All selfish seeking to the general good.
There shall come a time when each shall to another
Be as Christ would have him—brother unto brother.

LEWIS MORRIS.

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN

I. THE KEY TO THE FUTURE

COKETOWN is doomed. That phrase expressed the significance of the Rebirth of Social Consciousness. But if Coketown is doomed, what is to take its place? If the aspirations of twentieth-century democracy refuse to be satisfied with grimy squalor and sordid poverty as the fruits of industry, toward what new order of life are we trending? What, in a word, is the goal of present-day democracy? And along what lines of purpose is it to be approached?

"Democracy," wrote Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb in 1897, "is still the great Unknown."¹ In one sense, after the lapse of fourteen years, the words remain true; for he would be an adventurous man who confidently asserted in precisely what way contemporary social ideals will become incarnate in the Democratic Work-State of the Future. Yet in another sense, as Mr. and Mrs. Webb have themselves clearly shown,² closely to scan the industrial history of the nineteenth and of the opening years of the twentieth century, is to discover certainly the ruling ideas of the democratic movement, and the various, and sometimes conflicting, methods by which social advance has been sought.

¹ *Industrial Democracy*, p. 850.

² The student of British democracy will find Mr. and Mrs. Webb's works, *The History of Trade Unionism* and *Industrial Democracy*, indispensable to his research.

With less certainty, though with historical justification for the attempt, the roads may be indicated along which Demos is likely to travel in the coming years.

Obviously such a review of British industrial history is the only reliable source for valid deductions. The starting-point will naturally be the period of the Industrial Revolution, briefly described in our opening chapter. The watchwords of present-day democracy will become intelligible as tokens of the present ideals of the People, if we can trace their origin in the serfdom and struggles of the past.

II. THE SORROWS OF DEMOS

We take up the story at the dawn of the last century, when Demos began to ask what strange and terrible fate had befallen him. One time a skilled craftsman, with pride in the thing he carved or wove or forged, machinery had come between him and the thing he loved to fashion, robbed him of his craftsmanship, turned him into a "factory-hand," a machine-minder.

But not only had his former skill of eye and hand lost marketable worth, but he was rapidly losing power to earn wages sufficient for his own and his family's due subsistence. Why this was happening he could not clearly tell. Machinery ought to have lessened toil, and bettered the lot of all; yet for Demos the hours of labour increased, and the rate of pay decreased. Women, too, were drawn from family duties into factory life; children, who should have been at play, toiled beside their parents; and still the earnings of a whole family failed to keep the home intact.

At the same time he could not but see that the changes which depressed him from a *workman* into a *workserf* frequently operated in the reverse direction in the circumstances of his employer. A generation or two earlier, before the machine revolutionised industry, master and man had worked together, often

lived under the same roof; and, the minor jolts and jars of life apart, formed a little brotherhood of industry, considerate of each other's well-being. The Machine shattered all that. Only a capitalist could become a manufacturer owning machinery. Money ran the mill, and the mill ran for money. The gap between classes rapidly widened. In the old hand-working days a skilful craftsman might reasonably hope to become his own master; now all his life he was a toiler to build up the wealth of another. Skill had become the hired servant of capital. And while change wrought decay in the manual-workers' case—a decaying wage-rate, decay of leisure, sad decay of family life and joy—change, in the case of the capitalist-employers, often wrought development—a developing fortune, development of commercial power and local prestige, of home comfort and expanding luxury.

The Machine was not the only active agent in the filching of the workers' means of life. The Great Land Theft dates from this period. Between 1760 and 1843 nearly 7,000,000 acres of English common land were "enclosed," i.e. much of it stolen from village communities, generally by powerful land-owners.¹ Deprived of his ancient hereditary rights of tillage and pasturage by the strong arm of the class legalist, the working agriculturist was compelled to hire himself to the large landowner. Thus, like his brother-craftsman of the town, whose manual skill could not compete with the machine, and who must perforce become a "Hand" to weave or forge for the machine-owning capitalist, the countryman also lost his right to independent life, as field after field was boldly "enclosed" by the landed gentry. Wealth was might, and might reckoned as right.

Nor must the heavy burden of war-taxes be overlooked. From 1793 to 1815, with scarce a breathing-space, England was at war with France, fighting for

¹ Gibbins, *Industrial History of England*, p. 116.

national existence against the malignant genius of Napoleon. The total cost of the war exceeded eight hundred millions sterling, and war-taxes fell with crushing weight on the poor. Capitalists whose factories were coining fortunes could stand the strain; so could landowners, rejoicing in the famine-price of corn, and adding field to field at the public expense. But the hand-toiler was defenceless. The taxes "extended to every kind of food and drink, to the necessities not less than to the luxuries of daily life, to every item of property and every operation of trade and business."¹ Even windows were taxed, and, since daylight was dear, the war darkened the dwellings of the poor in more than a figurative sense. A long succession of bad harvests at home, and heavy import duties on foreign grain, forced up the price of wheat to unheard-of figures. From 49s. 3d. per quarter in 1793 it rose to 122s. per quarter in 1812. "Thousands of homes were starved in order to find the means for the great war. . . . To outward appearance the strife was waged by armies and generals; in reality the resources on which the struggle was based were the stint and starvation of labour, the overtaxed and underfed toils of childhood, the underpaid and uncertain employment of men."²

The final picture of sorrow can scarcely be drawn in words. Broken by poverty and hard labour, the only refuge remaining to thousands was the Poor Law. Apart from the idle, whom our unfruitful Poor Law system maintains when charity fails them, the sick, the aged, and—saddest of all—multitudes of children, orphaned, neglected, or simply destitute, came under Poor Law control. What befell the children almost passes belief. The Overseers of the Poor had power to apprentice them. The millowners of England wanted labour: their mills were working night and

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ix. p. 677.

² Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, vol. ii. p. 505.

day, for Napoleon's armies had shattered the continental system of industry, and English capitalists were amassing wealth out of Europe's needs. From work-house to mill the children were drafted by the hundred.

The mill-owners systematically communicated with the Overseers of the Poor, who arranged a day for the inspection of pauper children. Those chosen by the manufacturer were then conveyed by wagons or canal boats to their destination, and from that moment were doomed to slavery. Sometimes regular traffickers would take the place of the manufacturer, and transfer a number of children to a factory district, and there keep them, generally in some dark cellar, till they could hand them over to a millowner in want of hands, who would come and examine their height, strength, and bodily capacities, exactly as did the slave-dealers in the American markets. After that the children were simply at the mercy of their owners, nominally as apprentices, but in reality as mere slaves, who got no wages, and whom it was not worth while even to feed or clothe properly, because they were so cheap and their places could be so easily supplied. . . . Children were often worked *sixteen* hours a day, by day and by night. Even Sunday was used as a convenient time to clean the machinery. . . .

They were fed upon the coarsest and cheapest food, often with the same as that served out to the pigs of their master. They slept by turns and in relays in filthy beds which were never cool; for one set of children were sent to sleep in them as soon as the others had gone off to their daily or nightly toil. There was often no discrimination of the sexes; and disease, misery, and vice grew as in a hotbed of contagion. . . . The catalogue of cruelty and misery is too long to recite here; it may be read in the *Memoirs of Robert Blincoe*, himself an apprentice, or in the pages of the Blue books of the beginning of the century, in which even the methodical dry official language is startled into life by the misery it has to relate. . . . During the whole of the period of 1800 to 1820, and even to 1840, the results of their sufferings were seen in the early death of the majority of the children, and in the crippled and distorted forms of the majority of those who survived. On the women and grown-up girls the effects of long hours and wearisome work were equally disastrous.¹

¹ Gibbins, *Industrial History of England*, pp. 179-82.

Even adult men were treated as mere chattels. Under what was known as the Roundsman System, "the parish sold pauper labour to the occupiers of property at a certain low price, and made up the difference between that and the scale allowance. Sometimes the paupers were sold to the farmers at auction: at Yardley, Hastings, e.g. all the unemployed men were put up to sale weekly, and the clergyman on one occasion saw a lot of ten men knocked down to one of the farmers for 5s."¹

Well might Southey say of factory labour, in a letter written March 1, 1833, "the slave trade is mercy compared to it."

III. THE AWAKENING OF DEMOS

When Demos awoke, the revolt began. The industrial struggles of the nineteenth century seem at first sight a tangle of disputes, small and great, arising from the wearing-down of the workers, yet uninspired by a common policy. They appear to aim only at redress of some local grievance, to be guerilla warfare, unrelated to any general plan of campaign.

Certainly that is true of the beginnings of the revolt; though we shall see that gradually a scheme of advance, an idea of the cause of the ill, and knowledge of the good to be won, became clear.

But when Demos first awoke to his sorrows, educational effort was still in its infancy. Voluntary schools were to be found here and there, but national concern and care for education belonged to the future. Not till 1833 did Parliament vote an annual grant for public education, a subsidy of £20,000 to voluntary schools.

Thus when modern democracy challenged its oppressors it could but strike at the evil it saw and felt.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834*; quoted in the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1910*, pp. 60-1.

Indeed, had those primitive labour-leaders possessed the learning of the schools, instead of being unlettered bondsmen, they might still be pardoned for their bewilderment, and, as some would say, unreasoning violence. What was there in the past of England's annals to guide them? The situation was without historic parallel. The craftsman's skill was marketless beside the machine that outpaced and supplanted him. Into the factory he must go to be its servant. Men became the slaves of things. Alongside this revolution came sorrow after sorrow. "Gentlemen" fenced-in the commons, and the villagers lost their common fields. War taxes and bad harvests made food and drink, clothing and house-rent, far costlier. Free labourers were compelled to compete with parish apprentices, and wages fell fast. Strike, Demos must; but whom?

His first blow fell unavailingly on the "iron men," as he grimly named the machines. In the winter of 1811, and in 1816-7, the "Luddite" riots—fierce machine-breaking insurrections—occurred in the Northern and Midland counties. To destroy the machine, and restore the primacy of man, seemed the only way out of the *impasse*. Military force suppressed the riots, and the factory-system held its ground.

With the passing of the years, experience and reflection showed that the worker's real foe was not machinery, but the system which made the machine compete, instead of co-operate, with the workman. Under just conditions machinery should reduce hours of labour, do the heavy coarsening work that brutalises men, and so add to the joys and lessen the burdens of the people. But that recognition came later. It was the conviction that force could not stop the progress of invention, that machinery had come to stay, which soon diverted the main struggle into other fields than those of riotous outbreak.

Throughout these years there were constant appeals

to Parliament by the operatives to sustain their rates of wages, enforce the legal restriction of the number of apprentices, or prohibit certain kinds of machinery. The appeals were founded on long-established custom, for from the sixteenth century Parliament had regulated wages and conditions of employment, or empowered Quarter Sessions to do so locally. But in face of the Industrial Revolution Parliament stood perplexed. The problem was unprecedented. The wage-earners' Standard of Life was confessedly degraded. Mediaeval trade-laws, framed for a hand-working age, clearly needed revision in an age of machine-labour.

But when the House of Commons at last acted decisively, it was to shatter the workers' hopes. Under the potent pressure of the manufacturers, even the flimsy legal defences of the past were overthrown. The Commons surrendered to the capitalists. In 1813 the Statute of 1563, requiring Justices to fix wages, was repealed; in 1814 the Elizabethan Statute of Apprentices, limiting the number to be taken by an employer, and defining the terms of apprenticeship, was also repealed. Thus the last state of the workers was worse than the first. Parliament had decided that trade could best prosper if the conditions affecting trade were let alone; *laissez faire* became the ruling Governmental principle in relation to industry.

It was in these circumstances that the toilers—left to work out their own salvation—drew together, developed organisations of defence, and the modern Trade Union movement was born. Rioting was futile; Parliament would not help; the workers must help themselves.

IV. THE BIRTH OF MODERN TRADE UNIONISM (1799 *circa*—1825)

There had been earlier Trade Unions than those which struggled into life in the terrible years of tyranny a century ago. The wool-workers of the West of England, the tailors, silk-weavers, and sailmakers of London, and the framework-knitters of the Midlands, were organised in Unions in the preceding century. But what marks off these primitive Unions from those of the nineteenth century is the absence of democratic feeling. Working-class solidarity was unborn.

Their occasional disputes with their employers resembled rather family differences than conflicts between distinct social classes. They exhibit more tendency to "stand in" with their masters against rivals or interlopers, than to join their fellow-workers of other trades in an attack upon the capitalist class. In short, we have industrial society still divided vertically trade by trade, instead of horizontally between employers and wage-earners. This latter cleavage it is which has transformed the Trade Unionism of petty groups of skilled workmen into the modern Trade Union Movement.¹

The cause of the cleavage is plain. The factory system massed the workers by scores and hundreds in the mills, by tens of thousands in the "Coketowns" of the Midlands and the North. No longer were their interests one with those of their employer. Machinery sundered master from men; he became the capitalist, they his "hands" to wait upon the "iron men," the new makers of his wealth. Wages fell to starvation point, while the cost of living rapidly rose. In this fierce furnace the old order dissolved, the bonds of custom and sentiment parted. Class-conscious Democracy took shape in Unions of manual workers, formed to resist the barbaric pressure of the capitalists, and to restore a reasonable Standard of Life.

The immediate answer of the capitalists was the

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 39.

Combination Act of 1799. All combinations "in restraint of trade" were forbidden under heavy penalties. For the next twenty-five years Trade Union leaders lived under a very reign of terror. Sidelights on the anxieties and distresses of the period may be gained from such contemporary records of the Unions as have survived, and from the oral accounts passed on from one generation of Trade Unionists to another. We read, for instance, in the History of the "Friendly Society of Iron Moulders," founded in 1809:

The infamous Combination Laws were passed in 1799, and were not repealed until fifteen years after the formation of the Society. During the whole of this time the proceedings of the Society were illegal and rendered all its members liable to criminal prosecution. . . . Unfortunately we have no documentary evidence of the Society's proceedings during the first twenty years of its existence. This is not surprising when we consider the conditions under which the work of the Society was carried on. We have of necessity to rely on tradition, and one well-authenticated tradition is that in the earlier period of its history the officers had to meet at night in a field for the purpose of receiving the contributions of its members, and had to bury the books to prevent them being seized by the authorities.¹

The records of judicial proceedings provide other illustrations. Ten delegates of the calico-printers, who met at Bolton simply for conference in 1817, were arrested and imprisoned for three months. Seven scissor-grinders were similarly sentenced at Sheffield in 1816 for belonging "to what they called a Misfortune Club, which paid out-of-work benefit, and sought to maintain the customary rates." Scottish cotton-spinners struck in 1812; the five members of the Strike Committee were suddenly arrested, and sent to prison for terms varying from four to eighteen months.

The one bright spot in the dreary picture is the

¹ *Centenary Souvenir*, 1909, of the "Friendly Society of Iron Founders of England, Ireland, and Wales," pp. 11 and 13.

deepening unity of the workers. Old trade exclusiveness broke down. The London tailors sent money to Glasgow weavers on strike. Sheffield cutlers on trial for "the crime of combination" were defended by counsel whose fees were paid by "Clubs in Manchester." "The small Society of London Goldbeaters, during the three years 1810-12, lent or gave substantial sums, amounting in all to £200, to no fewer than fourteen other trades."¹

To the employers these instances of working-class solidarity seemed proofs of a widespread "conspiracy," only to be countered by fresh coercion. Hence the infamous "Six Acts" of 1819, which, among other violent measures, suppressed practically all public meetings, and effectively checked the growth of a working-class Press by imposing a crushing stamp-duty on cheap pamphlets. Against such brutal repression reaction was certain; and it is some little set-off against these savageries to recognise that the man to whom the manual workers primarily owe the repeal of the Combination Acts was himself an employer, Francis Place, a master-tailor of Charing Cross. Outside Parliament, with immense energy, Place accumulated evidence of the current inhumanities from all parts of the country; inside Parliament Joseph Hume, his tireless colleague, secured first a Committee, which reported in favour of repeal of the Combination Laws, then in 1824 an Act of Repeal, and finally in 1825 resisted the attempts of the alarmed and astonished employers to recover the lost right of repression, and held good most of the ground won by the Act of 1824. While *complete* freedom of association was denied until 1875, Place and Hume secured for the workers a limited legal sanction for Collective Bargaining. Trade Unions were still subject to hampering restrictions; but one right had been won, never to be forfeited—they had won the right to be.

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 81.

V. POLITICAL AGITATION

(1825—1846)

Their dependence on Parliament to reverse the unjust Combination Acts taught the workers of that generation the worth of political action. But knowledge was useless without power, and voteless men were politically impotent. Hence the first emergence of the "Suffrage Question." Hence, too, the rise of the "Radicals," men who urged *root* reforms. The Duke of Wellington declared a Radical to be little better than a thief. There had been theft, and that on a colossal scale, the theft of a people's land and livelihood; but the Duke saddled the responsibility on the wrong shoulders. It was to win back their stolen treasure of means of life sufficient to sustain life wholesomely that the Radicals claimed the franchise for the unrepresented classes, and into the Radical camp the workers swept by thousands.

The existing system of Parliamentary representation was indefensible. There were nomination boroughs, "in which the patron had an absolute right to choose his own candidate: one such constituency was an uninhabited green mound, another a ruined wall, a third was submarine."¹ The purchaser of the freehold returned the member. There were "rotten" boroughs, where wealth and landed influence finally determined elections. At Newark, in 1829, the Duke of Newcastle, whose nominee was defeated, promptly expelled every hostile voter from his tenancy, coolly answering objectors, "Have not I the right to do what I like with my own?" Great towns like Manchester and Birmingham had no representatives. The franchise scarcely touched even the middle-class.

The Reform Act of 1832 was the first victory of the new democracy. Carried in the teeth of frenzied opposition, whose persistence almost kindled revolu-

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. x. pp. 603, 604.

tion, it laid a foundation on which later reformers could base their work. Eighty-six corrupt constituencies were disfranchised, 143 new seats created; the franchise was extended to £10 householders in the boroughs and to copyholders and leaseholders in the counties, changes which enfranchised the middle-class. Stalwart Radicals saw their dream of universal suffrage still unrealised, for manual workers as a class remained voteless; but an irretraceable step had been taken on a road along which further advance could not be ultimately denied.

Yet the first Reformed Parliament did little to redress social wrong in Britain. A Factory Act, in 1833, reduced the working hours of children under thirteen years of age to eight per day, and of young people under eighteen years to twelve per day; even these minor concessions were tenaciously opposed, and adults still stood defenceless. Negro slavery was abolished in the Colonies in 1834, but economic slavery persisted in the Mother Country. The Poor Law Amendment Act of the same year, while removing gross abuses of administration, in other respects intensified suffering. "Outdoor Relief" was restricted, and "the Workhouse System" firmly established. Contrary to the intention of the Poor Law Commissioners, who urged that the various classes of the destitute should be separately housed, in the next few years "low, cheap homely (?) buildings" rose all over the country, in which the destitute were herded promiscuously—save for the separation of the sexes, carried to the shameful extreme of parting husband and wife. That aside, children and adults and the aged, the healthy and the sick and the lunatic, the deserving and the dissolute—all alike branded as "paupers"—formed one sordid aggregation of want within Workhouse walls. The new buildings were really "human warehouses," whose ill-assorted stock was kept in order by a merciless discipline.

If a Parliament elected on a middle-class franchise could offer no worthier alternatives to the destitute than starvation or these "poor men's prisons"—"Bastilles," as the men of the North angrily called them—let the workers themselves demand the franchise, and gain control of the law-making machine.

Chartism, the next phase of the people's movement, is important to our present review, as illustrating this train of thought. The Six Points of the People's Charter, drawn up by the Working Men's Association in 1838, were : universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, equal electoral districts, removal of the property qualification, the ballot, and payment of members. Democracy was seeking the weapon of the vote, but the aims of Chartism were wiser than its methods. The story of its futile ending in 1848—of the Newport Riot, the National Petition, and the abortive London Demonstration—lies off our track. Mrs. Gaskell's story, *Mary Barton*, should be read by all who seek to gain touch with the working-folk of the North in those sorrowful days. But before Chartism finally collapsed the fervour of democracy had found a more immediately practical cause. Its heart was set on the repeal of the Corn Laws.

The year of Waterloo, of the exile of Napoleon, and of the Great Peace, witnessed also the passing of the Corn Law. In 1815 the free import of foreign grain was prohibited until English wheat reached 80s. per quarter, a figure actually several shillings higher than the average price during the war. Thus the landlords protected their interests, while the workers starved. Years of fierce distress compelled slight modifications of the law. But it was the incisive speech of Richard Cobden, the eloquence of John Bright, and the tireless activities of the Anti-Corn League that gave a lead to the voteless multitude, and roused the nation to demand repeal. Cobden's call to Bright reflects the mood of the hour. Bright lost his wife in 1841, and

his grief was inconsolable. Said Cobden to him, "There are thousands of homes in England at this moment where wives, mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest till the Corn Laws are repealed." A wave of popular conviction carried both men into Parliament. The people's sorrows deepened. Failure of the potato-crop, and a short harvest in 1845, heralded a famine without modern parallel in Europe. Through Ireland, where potatoes were the staple food of half the population, death strode conqueror. "Starving Irish poured into England, and died in thousands of famine fever." The country thrilled with horror and anger. Sir Robert Peel, whose attachment to Protection had long been weakening, proclaimed himself convinced by Cobden's arguments; and, despite the resentment of his party, crowned his Premiership by the passage of an Act repealing the Corn Laws, on June 26, 1846.

Free Trade had won its greatest triumph, and an aroused democracy their second victory; for as the Reform Act of 1832 paved the way for a democratised franchise, Corn Law Repeal in 1846 asserted the people's right to live, against the landed capitalists' lust for gold. In John Bright's words, Peel's Free Trade policy in giving the people bread had "put the Lord's Prayer into an Act of Parliament."

VI. THE TRADES UNION AND THE TRADE UNIONS (1830—1840)

We must retrace our steps a little. After the repeal, in 1824-5, of the Combination Acts, which forbade Trade Unions, Unionism grew apace. The next quarter of a century was marked by turbulent unrest and deepening class hostility. From the well-remembered political campaigns of those dark days we turn to the

less familiar struggles, small and great, in which the manual workers strove to regain a wholesome Standard of Life.

First a new type of Union enters the field, a union of Unions, a *Trades Union*. Of many ephemeral efforts¹ to weld all Unions into one covering the whole area of national industry, the most ambitious, and for a time successful, was linked with the name of Robert Owen, apostle of Co-operation and forerunner of Socialism. In 1834 he founded the "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union." Unions of workers in various industries and neighbourhoods were speedily affiliated to it. Its membership was reported to exceed half a million. It sent out delegates to organise trades in districts where Unionism had no hold, and Unions leaped into life everywhere. In its early vigorous youth, local strikes for better conditions of labour were supported.

The employers' counter-move was the presentation of "the Document." When Unionists claimed a living wage or a shorter working-day, masters required their men to sign a formal renunciation of the Union. "The Document" was very much in evidence during the next two or three decades. The following is the actual wording of the "Document" which iron-moulders were asked to sign, during the period following the great engineers' strike to which reference is made on a later page :

Declaration made by the undersigned on engaging in the employment of ——. I, A. B., do hereby honestly, and in its simplest sense and plainest meaning, declare that I am neither now nor will, while in your employment, become a member or contribute to or otherwise belong to or support, any trade union or society which directly

¹ A "National Association for the Protection of Labour," founded in 1830, had a short but vigorous career. A "National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour," established in 1845, existed for fifteen years, though it failed to secure the adhesion of some of the largest Trade Unions.

or indirectly by its rules or any of its meetings or transactions of its business, or by any means of its officers or funds, takes cognisance of, professes to control, or interferes with the arrangements or regulations of this or any other manufacturing or trade establishment, the hours or terms of labour, the contracts or agreements of employer or employed, or the qualifications or period of service. I do also declare that I have no purpose or intention to call in question the right of any man to follow any honest calling in which he may desire to engage, or to make what arrangement and engagement of the workmen he pleases upon whatever terms they choose mutually to agree.

Signed ———

Dated ———

Witnessed ———

Union after Union collapsed as withdrawal from its membership became the *sine qua non* of employment. Leave the Union or starve, was a brutal but crushing alternative.

Nor was the arm of the law left uninvoked. Public opinion would not permit repeal of the Acts of 1824–5, but legal subtlety found another way of repression. The classic instance is the trial of the Dorchester labourers in 1834. Hunger, and despair of better times, led the agricultural labourers of the Southern counties to organise and claim higher wages. At first successful, they secured an advance to 10s. a week, but, a year after, the farmers in the neighbourhood of Tolpuddle, a village near Dorchester, reduced the rate of hire shilling by shilling till their unhappy serfs were receiving only 7s. weekly. In distress, the labourers inquired about the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, and obtained a visit of two of its delegates to their village. A “Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers” was formed under their guidance, and arrangements made for the initiatory rites of its “Grand Lodge.” The farmers placarded the village with warnings that any who joined the Union were liable to transportation. Events

proved the threat to be no empty one. George Loveless and five other labourers were arrested. No charge was brought other than taking the initiatory oath of their "Lodge," an act held to be illegal under an obscure and almost forgotten Statute. The men were of good character, two of them Methodist local preachers. Yet after a brief trial they were actually sentenced to seven years' transportation, and the next month sailed as convicts to Botany Bay! ¹

Under the pressure of "the Document," and of legal bias as displayed in the Dorchester case, and of the discredit attaching to a series of unsuccessful strikes, Owen's "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union" gave way. In its stead there grew up in the industries demanding most skill, and in which the workers were massed in the greatest numbers, Trade Unions caring exclusively for their sectional industrial interests. It is to this period that most of the great Unions of to-day date back their origin, or substantial development. The *Trades Union* failed; its root idea of the solidarity of labour was to find a nobler expression in the Collectivist Movement a generation later. The *Trade Unions* succeeded; the middle decades of the nineteenth century saw their growth into a permanent element of British industrial life.

¹ Agitation by the "London Dorchester Committee" secured a reversal of the barbarous sentence two years later, though, through official blundering, four years passed before the exiles returned.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN (*continued*)

I. THE GROWTH OF THE TRADE UNIONS (1840—1875)

A SURVEY of the middle decades of the last century reveals modern Trade Unionism advancing towards maturity.

Out of the tangled undergrowth of Committees and Councils, strikes and "lock-outs," arbitrations and conciliation schemes, political agitation, Parliamentary inquiries, and Acts of Parliament, there emerge, more or less conspicuously, these results of abiding significance. A new type of labour leader won his way to power. A new type of Trade Union grew up under his guidance; and, ebb and flow notwithstanding, Trade Unionism steadily advanced in strength and promise of permanence. A new grouping of Trade Unions into local Trade Councils focused the organised working-class life of the great centres, and supplied driving power to movements aiming at industrial freedom and redress. Finally, toward the end of this period, the full legal recognition of Collective Bargaining was secured by two epoch-marking Acts of Parliament in 1875.

1. *The New Type of Labour Leader.*—In the earlier days leadership was often self-assumed. Forceful men of ready or vehement speech spoke for their fellows.

But experience proved the need of other gifts. To debate wages, hours, etc., with the masters, or to devise methods of Parliamentary redress, the men's leaders required intimate knowledge of trade processes: the "Lists" which determine the wages of Lancashire cotton operatives, and the "Sliding Scales" adjusting wages to the market price of the product, which have had a limited vogue in the coal and iron industries, are good illustrations of the minute acquaintance with trade conditions necessary to effective Union leadership in the most highly organised crafts. Further, the Unions more and more became huge Mutual Insurance Corporations, assuring their members, for small weekly payments, against sickness, accident, and sometimes unemployment and old age.

Accordingly, as we note the growth of the new type of Trade Union, organised with such care so as to survive an extended strike or "lock-out" or wave of trade depression, bargaining with the masters over plain issues of hours or wages or over intricacies of manufacture, and defending its members against threatened destitution, we shall also see the emergence of a group of labour leaders, shrewd and painstaking as well as forceful.

It is of great importance to notice this. The victories of democracy had heretofore been won mainly under middle-class or even aristocratic leadership. The brain of the agitation to repeal the Combination Acts was a master-tailor, Francis Place; John Bright, Richard Cobden, and Robert Owen were all manufacturers; Shaftesbury, of Factory Act fame, was the seventh earl of his line. But from the middle decades of the nineteenth century democracy began to furnish its own leaders, and the secretarial responsibilities of the Trade Unions fashioned the first race. The direct representation of Labour on Royal Commissions, Municipal Councils, and in Parliament, with which we are familiar to-day, looks back to this period for the

training of its pioneers. Near its close we find, for the first time in English history, two working-men in Parliament, Alexander Macdonald representing Stafford, and Thomas Burt representing Morpeth, miners both of them, returned at the General Election of 1874.

2. *The New Type of Trade Union*.—1840 to 1850 were years of active propagandism. A "Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland," formed in 1841, in a brief life of three years sent out fifty-three organisers, "who visited every pit in the kingdom," and enrolled, it is said, over 100,000 members. The Potters' Union was re-established in 1844. The National Typographical Society dates from the same year.

Yet of greater moment was the policy of "Amalgamation," entered upon deliberately in 1850, which ushered in the new type of Trade Union. Small and often rival Unions in the branches of one industry were welded into a single strong body. Here we encounter the new leaders of Trade Unionism. The task of "Amalgamation" demanded statesmanship and tact of a high order. The engineering trades were the first to move. To William Newton and William Allan belong the chief honour of forging into one organisation, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the numerous minor Unions which had till then existed.¹ This was, as we have noted, in 1850, and a few months later the new policy was severely tested. The men objected to systematic overtime and piece-work. The masters, ignoring an offer to submit the case to arbitration, closed "every important engineering establishment in Lancashire and the Metropolis." The "lock-out" lasted three months, and the men lost. The employers had meant to crush the new combination, but the Amalgamated Society survived, despite

¹ With the single exception of the Steam-engine Makers' Society, which dates from 1824, stood out of the amalgamation of 1850, and still retains a separate existence.

the victory of the masters and the drain on its funds. Thus by outliving defeat this union of Unions justified itself. Unity proved to be strength. Its financial and numerical position was quickly restored and improved, while the publicity of the conflict advertised the merits of "Amalgamation" to the Trade Union World.

Within a few years the Engineers' Society became the model of a fusion of Unions in other great trades. Following the long "lock-out" in the London Building Trades in 1859, which showed that the little "Benefit Clubs" of carpenters could not sustain their members in a prolonged dispute, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was founded in 1860. Robert Applegarth, appointed secretary in 1862, steadily developed its work, and himself quickly rose to national prominence in Trade Union affairs. "Scarcely a trade exists which did not, between 1852 and 1875, either attempt to imitate the whole constitution of the Engineers, or incorporate one or other of its characteristic features."¹

After the great "Amalgamations" came a drawing together of the leaders of the larger Unions, and the framing under their guidance of a common Trade Union programme. The headquarters of most of the great societies at this time were in London, and so their salaried officers naturally came into close touch with one another. Allan and Applegarth, of the "Engineers" and "Carpenters," Daniel Guile, of the "Ironfounders," Edwin Coulson, of the "Bricklayers," and George Odger, Radical orator and member of a Shoemakers' Union, were conspicuous among the leaders in London. They acted in concert with pioneers in the provinces, such as Alexander Macdonald, who was reorganising the miners in the North, and his friend, Alexander Campbell, virtual founder in 1858 of the Glasgow Trades Council.

To the influence of these men is largely due the

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 205-6.

threefold policy of building up the Unions into powerful Mutual Insurance Corporations, of insistent upholding of a Minimum Standard of Life for their members, and of fighting Labour's battle in the Parliamentary arena.

Insurance stands first in this threefold policy. Many of the earlier Unions were simply "Strike Societies," levying 1*d.* or 2*d.* per week per member, to support men "locked-out" or on strike. Built on a foundation of shifting fortune, they rose and fell with amazing frequency. But the Unionism of the Amalgamation days was built on the sure rock of Mutual Insurance—Insurance against all the mischances of the workers' lot. On one side the Unions became great Friendly Societies, making provision for their insuring members for sickness, accident, old age, and "burial money"—competing in doing so with the "Oddfellows" and similar institutions. On another side they struck out a new line in providing Out-of-Work Benefit, not only for men actually on strike, but also—in many Unions—for members simply unemployed. The intricacies of Union Insurance finance lie wide of our quest.¹ The relevant points are: first, that through its Insurance activities, Trade Unionism achieved stability; to insure its members against mischances meant usually to assure the Union against mischance also, for the contributions paid, and the "benefits" expected, held members to

¹ Of the 100 principal Unions all provide dispute benefit; 79 in the year 1905 provided unemployed benefit (including in some cases travelling pay); 79 sick or accident benefit; 37 superannuation benefit; and 87 funeral benefit; 32 Unions providing all classes of benefit. On the basis of an average of the ten years 1897–1906, the following analysis of the proportionate expenditure of the 100 principal Unions on various classes of objects has been made: on disputes, 13·4 per cent.; on unemployed, 22·1 per cent.; on friendly benefits (other than unemployed), 42·5 per cent.; on working expenses, 22 per cent. The 42·5 per cent. of expenditure on friendly benefits is made up of 19·1 per cent. on sick and accident, 12·4 per cent. on superannuation, and 11 per cent. on funeral and other benefits.—Article, "Trade Unions," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition.

the Union ; and, second, the control of great reserve funds indefinitely increased the power of the Unions when negotiating with employers.

The persistent effort to secure a Minimum Standard of Life—the second point in the Union programme—will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it suffices to recall the piteous picture of the degradation of the Standard of Life presented in the preceding chapter, and to name the ways by which the new leaders sought, with varying success, to right the wrong : restriction of boy labour, Out-of-Work Benefit to members who through fear of penury might take work at less than Union rates, negotiations with employers to raise wages or lessen working hours, the occasional weapon of the strike, the more frequent recourse to arbitration, and pressure on Parliament.

3: *The New Grouping of Trade Unions in Local Trades Councils.*—Redress of labour's grievances by Parliament, the third point in the new programme, brings us to the formation of Local Trades Councils as centres for discussion and for the development of a Parliamentary campaign. For a generation past, Trade Unionists, as such, had ceased to look to Parliament for help ; Union rules, in some cases, explicitly forbade any mention of politics in their meetings. Hence the need for the new engine, the Local Trades Council, which should federate for consultative and aggressive purposes the Unions of a given area. Often the nucleus of a Council lay ready to hand in an existing Association of organised trades. By 1861 Councils were in existence in Glasgow, Sheffield, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and London ; by 1891 a network of Councils covered the country.

We note, in passing, that out of these Local Councils grew the annual Trade Union Congress, "the Parliament of British labour," as it has been called.

The one conspicuous legislative result of the work of the Local Trades Councils was the Master and

Servant Act of 1867. Master and servant stood unequal before the law. "If a labourer under a contract left his work without notice, or otherwise committed a breach of contract with his master, he could be arrested on warrant, taken out of his house, or even out of his bed, and sent to prison with hard labour. If, on the other hand, the master withheld wages legally due, the workman could only proceed against him by civil action."¹ Moreover, "whilst a master sued by a servant could be witness in his own favour, the servant prosecuted by his employer could not give evidence on his own behalf; and it frequently happened that no other evidence than the employer's could be produced."² Since in a single year 10,339 cases of breach of contract of service came before the courts, the area of possible—often actual—injustice was immense.

The new Councils concentrated forces on this issue. A national meeting of Trade Union delegates, the first of its kind, held in 1864 in London opened negotiations with members of Parliament, drafted with them an amending Bill, and initiated a campaign in its support. In three years the fight was won. The Act of 1867 put master and man on an equality before the Justices, "who might simply order the fulfilment of the contract, or inflict a moderate fine," while the workman was enabled to give evidence on his own behalf. The Unions had scored their first positive success in legislation.

4. *Full Legal Recognition of Collective Bargaining.*—The crowning victory of this period was won at a time when Trade Unionism seemed likely to lose its scanty gains, and even the right to exist. Its growth in wealth, membership, and influence alarmed the employers. "Lock-outs" to compel the men to forsake

¹ Paul, *History of Modern England*, vol. iii. p. 103.

² Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 232-6. The Act was replaced in 1875 by an Employers and Workmen Act, a significant change in title.

their Unions became frequent. "One Yorkshire miner complained in 1866 that he had been 'locked-out' about 24 months in 6 years."¹ The policy failed. The Unions survived, and the men's confidence in them was deepened by the masters' hostility. Yet the tone of the Union movement as a whole was conciliatory. The leaders steadily discouraged strikes. A National Conference of delegates in 1866 pronounced in favour of arbitration in industrial disputes, and of the establishment of Councils of Conciliation.

Unhappily there were exceptions. Savage outrages on non-Unionists in Sheffield and Manchester terrified the public. "Rattening," i.e. the seizing of a workman's tools for non-compliance with Union rules—the loss being ironically charged to rats—was frequent among the Sheffield grinders. But worse things were done. "Recalcitrant workmen were terrorised by explosions of cans of gunpowder in the troughs of their grinding-wheels or thrown down their chimneys."² In 1866 the house of a man named Fearneyhough, a Sheffield saw-grinder, who had left his Union, was blown up with gunpowder.

Responsible Trade Unionist leaders publicly condemned the outrages, hotly repudiated the assumption that they were characteristic of Unionist methods, and supported the public demand for a Parliamentary inquiry. The next year the Government appointed a Commission to examine all such outrages during the past ten years, and—significantly enough—to report on *the whole subject of Trade Unionism and its effects*.

Within a few months new dangers to Unionism arose through a series of adverse legal decisions. Union funds were imperilled by judgments which left it very uncertain whether a Union could successfully prosecute a defaulting treasurer. Further, the right of "peaceful picketing" was challenged during a great strike of

¹ Quoted in *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 239.

² *Ibid.*, p. 243, note.

London tailors in 1867. The masters posted notices, "Good hands wanted; no Unionists need apply." Strikers gathered in groups near the shops to persuade non-Unionists to desist from work. The officers of the Union were indicted for "conspiracy" and found guilty. Thus men who persuaded non-Unionists not to work were branded criminals; while masters might refuse work to Unionists, because they were Unionists, without legal challenge.

Trade Unionism was at bay. The Sheffield outrages, the Judges' decisions, and the pending Parliamentary Commission made its whole future uncertain. Well was it that the leaders were wise and cautious men. For the next few years Applegarth and his colleagues, reinforced by a group of middle-class allies, chief of whom were Frederic Harrison and Thomas Hughes, of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* fame, shaped in constant conference a policy of defence. The attempt to crush Unionism through the Commission had to be frustrated, and a new legal status won which would protect their funds and set the Unions free to negotiate with employers on equal terms. Harrison and Hughes served on the Commission. The Union evidence laid stress on the value to the workers of the Insurance provisions of the great Amalgamated Societies, and on their attempts to improve industrial conditions. The Sheffield outrages were repudiated; they were traced back to the old-fashioned Trade Clubs—and only to a small proportion of these¹—from whose policy the leaders of the new Unions strongly dissented.

When the Reports of the Commission were issued they were seen to be more favourable to Unionism than had been anticipated. A Majority Report went

¹ "Sheffield stood almost alone in its bad eminence, for in Manchester only a single Union, the Brickmakers', had any such charge brought home to it. Even in Sheffield four-fifths of the Unions were innocent, and the examiners reported to the Commissioners that outrages had diminished since 1859, the year when they were most rife."—Paul, *History of Modern England*, vol. iii. p. 102.

some way toward improving their legal position. The Minority Report, for which Harrison and Hughes were responsible, went farther, and recommended that "all special laws affecting contracts for labour should be repealed, and that no act done by a number of men together should be punished as a crime if it were not criminal in itself";¹ legal protection was also to be accorded to Union funds.

All promised well. Even the *Times* took a friendly attitude: "True statesmanship," it said, "will neither seek to augment nor to reduce their (the Unions') influence, but, accepting it as a fact, will give it free scope for legal development."² But the Government Bills which followed in 1871 took away with one hand as much as they gave with the other. The good points of the Minority Report were conceded, but "peaceful picketing" in support of a strike, even by a single person, was definitely declared criminal. A storm of protest arose, but unavailing, and the Bills quickly became law.

Parliament had presented a new weapon to tyrannous employers, for if "peaceful picketing" was illegal a successful strike was almost impossible.³ The same year seven women were imprisoned in South Wales merely for saying "Bah" to a "blackleg." In 1872 a number of London gas-stokers were dismissed for

¹ Paul, *History of Modern England*, vol. iii. p. 276. Lord Lichfield also signed the Minority Report.

² July 8, 1869.

³ "Almost any action taken by Trade Unionists to induce a man not to accept employment at a struck shop resulted, under the new Act, in imprisonment with hard labour. The intolerable injustice of this state of things was made more glaring by the freedom allowed to the employers to make all possible use of 'blacklists' and 'character notes,' by which obnoxious men were prevented from getting work. No prosecution ever took place for this form of molestation or obstruction. No employer was ever placed in the dock under the law which professedly applied to both parties. In short, boycotting by the employers was freely permitted; boycotting by the men was put down by the police."—Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 268.

complicity in a strike ; others who refused to work until their mates were taken on again were prosecuted and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment.¹ The position was intolerable. But the workers were not as defenceless as heretofore. Disraeli's Reform Act of 1867 had just enfranchised the town artisan ; and when agitation against the new law culminated in the General Election of 1874, the workman's vote helped to overthrow Gladstone's Government, the authors of the Acts of 1871. Independent Labour candidates stood in several constituencies, and, as we have noted, the first two working-men M.P.'s were elected, Alexander Macdonald and Thomas Burt.

The General Election decided the issue. The Trade Union Acts of 1875 and 1876, passed by the new Conservative Government, settled the question for a generation. Full legal recognition was assured to Trade Unions ; "peaceful picketing" explicitly legalised ; "no act committed by a group of workmen was henceforth punishable unless the same act by an individual was itself a criminal offence. Collective Bargaining, in short, with all its necessary accompaniments, was, after fifty years of legislative struggle, fully recognised by the law of the land."

Along another line notable progress was made. The strife of those anxious years brought scores of thousands of recruits into the Union ranks ; "it is probable that between 1871 and 1875 the number of Trade Unionists was more than doubled."

II. THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

To the Co-operative Movement passing reference is due, for it is certainly another mark of the rise of democracy in Britain, and, in some respects, a foreshadowing of the coming social order. New Lanark

¹ The men were released after four months' imprisonment by the Home Secretary's intervention.

and the other communal experiments of Robert Owen, the father of Co-operation, need not detain us. Nor need the "self-governing workshops" projected by Maurice, Kingsley, and the other "Christian Socialists" of the "fifties." Both schemes were devised by middle-class thinkers for manual workers. Co-operation as a democratic movement, its methods devised by manual workers themselves, begins with the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844.

"Twenty-eight poor men, flannel-weavers and such like, got together a capital of £28 by twopenny and threepenny subscriptions, and in December 1844 opened in Toad Lane, Rochdale, a little shop, from which, speaking broadly, the whole of British Co-operation, and very much of that of other lands, has grown."¹ They "determined that, after paying 5 per cent. interest on the share capital, all profit should be allotted to the purchasing members in proportion to their purchases, and be capitalised in the name of the member entitled, until his share amounted to £5."² Further profits would be distributed in dividends to the members. It was thus each member's interest to purchase at the store, and to introduce new customers. The ownership of the store remained always with the members.

The Rochdale plan succeeded, and was imitated widely. The discovery made by the Rochdale weavers, that customers could jointly and economically organise the supply of their household needs, was the germ of a great democratic movement. To-day the Co-operative Stores throughout Britain count two-and-three-quarter million members, mostly small wage-earners, and carry on every kind of business³ save the sale of

¹ Aneurin Williams, Article, "Co-operation," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition.

² £200 is the maximum any member may hold in the share capital to-day.

³ "Among them they carry on every kind of business (except only the provision of alcoholic drinks), from agriculture and manu-

strong drink ; while a Wholesale Co-operative Society imports, manufactures, and distributes goods on an immense scale to the local Stores. Making full allowance for some local failures, for limitations and imperfections, the rapid, sustained success of the movement as a whole is indisputable.

Its commercial prosperity apart, Co-operation has been a valuable training in democratic government and business method. The affairs of each Society are managed by a Committee elected by the shareholders, each of whom, man or woman, has one vote. The Committee control employees, plan the expansion of the business, arrange for stock-taking, recommend dividends, in short, keep careful oversight of the Stores, accounting for their actions at quarterly meetings of the members, at which all the concerns of the Society are considered. Even the great "Co-operative Wholesale Society, wielding six millions of capital, doing twenty-five million pounds a year of business, employing nearly twenty thousand hands, in a hundred different trades, at a hundred and fifty separate establishments, in ten different counties, is all managed

facture to transport and banking ; they have their own arable, pasture, and fruit farms, and their own creameries, butter and bacon and biscuit works, cocoa and jam and sauce and pickle factories ; their own flour-mills and bakeries ; their own dressmaking and shirt-making and tailoring workshops, and even a corset factory ; their own cotton-mills and clothing factories ; their own hide and skin and boot and shoe and brush and mat and soap and lard and candle and furniture works ; their own tin-plate works, and metal ware and crockery factories ; their own printing establishments and their own newspapers ; their own tea estates in Ceylon ; their own buyers in foreign countries and their own ships on the sea ; their own thousands of distributive stores, their own arrangements for insurance, their own banks, and even their own common libraries. . . . The aggregate amount of the commodities and services thus supplied by themselves to themselves by the agency of their little army of 50,000 salaried officials, of the work thus performed for the common benefit without the supposed indispensable incentive of profit-making, and yet without any of the impracticabilities of communism, *exceeds one hundred and twenty millions sterling annually* ; or more than the aggregate receipts from all sources of the municipalities and county councils and the other local governing bodies put together."—*Cambridge Modern History*, vol. xii. p. 739.

by a Committee of thirty-two ex-workmen, elected annually by the two million members.”¹

It is easy to see how such a training in business management has fitted working-men to take an effective part in local government: a keen Co-operator may well make a good Councillor. This is the more true because an element of idealism enters into Co-operative enterprises. The root-principle of Co-operation is opposed to all sweating, undercutting, and the sale of inferior goods; to counsel or condone either is to sin against the movement. To provide pure commodities at a fair price, neither to underpay nor overwork employees nor to sell “sweated” goods, to share equitably the profits of trading among the purchasing members, to make the “Stores” a centre of economic and social improvement to them all: such is the Co-operator’s ideal. Educational lectures, concerts, the provision of reading-rooms, libraries, and of recreative facilities, enter into the programme of many Societies; whilst occasional grants to Benevolent Funds, or to workers on strike,² indicate close sympathy with other aspects of democratic life. While the prosperity of the Societies, and the prospect of a good dividend—the average dividend is about 2s. 6d. in the £—certainly induce many to become members, the idealist has shaped the movement, and still mainly controls it; “the government has been largely in the hands of men of ideas, who believe that Stores are but a step to co-operative production, and on to the ‘co-operative commonwealth.’” Swayed by these enriching ideas, learning how to transmute them into a new order of industry, into a system of collective

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. xii. p. 740.

² E.g. the agenda of the Quarterly Meeting of the Soho Co-operative Society, April 24, 1911, includes: Confirmation of Committee’s action in granting the following donations from Benevolent Fund—Smethwick Aid Society, £5; Handsworth Aid Society, £3; South Wales Colliery Strike Fund, per Penygraig and Mid-Rhondda Societies, £5.

housekeeping, the co-operator is in truth a herald of the Collective Age; he has shown, along one line of action, that it is possible to substitute for the competitive system of trading—with its degradation of the workers' Standard of Life—a system of industry “controlled by all in the common interest, and distributing on principles of equity and reason, mutually agreed on, the wealth produced.”¹

III. THE COMING OF COLLECTIVISM

Socialism, as an ideal of democracy, will be considered in the next chapter. In this and the following section we note its successive impacts on British democracy, and also the extent to which Socialistic theory has influenced and still influences democratic thinking.

But to avoid the peril of vagueness—for here we enter the Land of Debate—it will be well to start with a clear authoritative definition of the aims of *present-day* Socialism. The one cited below is that embodied in the official “Programme” of the Independent Labour Party. It is chosen for this reason. Socialism, as the I.L.P. defines it, is the Socialism that now chiefly counts in British working-class life. The I.L.P., from its formation in 1893, has kept in close touch with Trade Unionism; the eight I.L.P. Members of Parliament in the Parliament of 1911² unite with the Trade Unionist M.P.’s to form the Parliamentary Labour Party, of which a member of the I.L.P., Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, is the present Chairman.

¹ Aneurin Williams, Article, “Co-operation,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition.

² The eight I.L.P. members of Parliament returned at the General Election of December, 1910, were: J. R. Clynes (N.E. Manchester); J. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil), F. W. Jowett (Bradford West), J. Ramsay MacDonald (Leicester), J. Parker (Halifax), P. Snowden (Blackburn), T. Richardson (Whitehaven), George Lansbury (Bow and Bromley). The names of such well-known Socialist leaders attest the authoritative nature of the definition of Socialist aims given.

The Object of the I.L.P. is :

To establish the Socialist State, when land and capital will be held by the community and used for the well-being of the community, and when the exchange of commodities will be organised also by the community, so as to secure the highest possible standard of life for the individual. In giving effect to this object it shall work as part of the International Socialist Movement.

Expanding this statement the "Programme" continues :—

The true object of industry being the production of the requirements of life, the responsibility should rest with the community collectively, therefore—

The land, being the storehouse of all the necessities of life, should be declared and treated as public property.

The capital necessary for industrial operations should be owned and used collectively.

Work, and wealth resulting therefrom, should be equitably distributed over the population.

Though there were earlier points of contact between Socialistic theory and British democracy, of which we take note directly, the *effective* impact of Socialism was in the late "eighties" of the nineteenth century.

To the student of social-economic history, it will be obvious that Socialism, as the I.L.P. defines its aims, the acquirement and administration by the community of land, capital, and the framework of industry—could not previously have been urged as a practicable programme. For if the State is to own and employ on an increasing scale, until it becomes the Great Owner of wealth and the Great Employer of labour, the State must develop administrative machinery adequate to its tasks. In other words, democratic control must exist before it can be exercised. Parish and District Councils, Municipal Councils, County Councils, and great directive Departments of the State responsible to a democratically elected Parliament, were necessary before the Socialist Programme of the I.L.P. could

become a working policy. First the scaffolding, then the structure. A glance at the full text of the I.L.P. "Programme" will show that it is through the new machinery of local and Imperial government that its aims are to be realised.¹

The new machinery came into being on this wise.

The extension of the franchise to class after class of the nation was the first necessity. The Suffrage was extended to the middle-class man in 1832, to the town artisan in 1867, to the agricultural labourer in 1885, while the Ballot Act of 1872 shielded the Suffrage with secrecy. Thus step by step the House of Commons came more closely to reflect the National Will.² So much for the National Legislature. Popular control of *local* affairs is of more local growth. County Councils date from Mr. Ritchie's Local Government Act of 1888, which transferred most of the administrative business of the Counties from the county magistrates, meeting in Quarter Sessions, to Councils elected by the ratepayers of the County; District and Parish Councils date from Mr. Fowler's Act of 1894.³

The earlier Socialists had no such scaffolding of public administration at hand. Their ideal of a Co-operative Commonwealth was necessarily shaped to the industrial framework of their day. Hence Robert Owen, in 1817, planned small industrial townships in

¹ The full text of the chief Socialist programmes, both British and foreign, including that of the I.L.P., is given in Ensor's *Modern Socialism*, pp. 317 *et seq.*

² The National Will can only be represented *with full accuracy* in the elective House when all adults of the community—not disqualified by alienage, crime, or insanity—women as well as men, exercise the vote on equal terms.

³ Earlier steps were the POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT OF 1834, which provided that Guardians of the Poor should ordinarily be elected by the ratepayers; the MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT OF 1835, which gave ratepayers in specified boroughs the municipal franchise; and the directly elected SCHOOL BOARDS, established by the EDUCATION ACT OF 1870, which administered local education until their powers were transferred to the County Councils in 1902.

which all should work, and all share the produce of their labour. Hence, also, the experiments in "self-governing" workshops projected by the Christian Socialists of the "forties" and "fifties."

The time-note, as one may call it—the stating of the Socialist idea in terms of the environing age—is even more manifest in the message of the fiery prophet of Socialism, Karl Marx. Expelled in turn from Germany and France, he came, in 1849, when Europe still rumbled with revolution, to London, and there wrote *Das Kapital*. To him it was clear that the world's unrest was a part of the age-process. The capitalists had assumed possession of the means of life. The workers, in order to live, must oppose and overthrow their exploiters. Class-war was inevitable, had in truth begun. The proletariat of all nations would triumph. By political action they would wrest supremacy from the capitalists, and socialise the land, capital, and instruments of production and distribution. So his call to the toilers rang out: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite!" The International Association of Working Men, better known simply as the "International," was founded in 1864, with Marx as its real leader. Its importance to our study is that in its early years notable English Trade Unionists like Applegarth and Odger were influential in its councils, and through them the ideas of Marx obtained wide currency in Trade Union circles.

Fifteen years passed before the next quickening of the collective consciousness. The "International" had died down to a flickering flame. Once again the pen stirred the embers. Henry George's book, *Progress and Poverty*, with its insistent doctrine that the land of every country belongs of right to all the people of that country, had an immense influence on public thought. Land Nationalisation, a chief point in the Socialist programme, became a familiar idea to demo-

cratic audiences, as George himself lectured throughout the country in 1881-2.

Out of this ferment various Socialist Societies arose. The Social Democratic Federation, Marxian in spirit and teaching, originated in 1883. The Fabian Society, opportunist and constructive in policy, was formed in 1884. It was clear that, in some shape, Socialism would have seriously to be reckoned with in the future. Sir William Harcourt's dictum, in 1888, "We are all Socialists now," while not to be read as a precise adherence to the new views, illustrates their permeation of public thought. And when the framework of local government—County, District, and Parish Councils—was developed by the Acts of 1888 and 1894, it became possible that the process of socialisation which Marx foresaw might be accomplished by methods he could not have forecast. Revolution might come by evolution.

IV. SOCIALISM AND TRADE UNIONISM

(1882 *circa*—1890)

The ferment of Socialistic thought, and the simultaneous uprearing of a framework of democratic local government, made the late "eighties" and the early "nineties" years of golden opportunity to Socialist leaders in Britain.

The specific reasons for the success of their propaganda among Trade Unionists are not far to seek. Trade Unionism won the legal right to Collective Bargaining in 1875. Since then, it had been content to build up its membership from working-men of all parties, and, in the main, had held aloof from politics. The Socialist challenge broke in on this reign of quiet, and compelled Trade Unionists to recognise great areas of social wrong for which the current policy of the Unions had no remedy. A very considerable proportion of rank-and-file Unionists became convinced that, serviceable

as their Unions had been, there were limits to their power of securing industrial betterment. Experience upheld the Socialist contention that the causes of the sordid restricted lot of the worker struck deeper than the unwillingness of employers to concede each new demand the Unions made. *The causes were rooted in the competitive system of industry.* Given an employer who wished to deal generously with his employees, his goodwill was in bondage to the system under which he traded. To get contracts in the face of keen competition he must minutely calculate the cost of labour and material. Often the margin of possible profit was too small, the risk of possible loss too great, to enable him to raise wages, or in any costly way to better the work-conditions of his staff. If the good employer was hampered thus, what was likely to be the attitude of the heartless master? Under him, wages were likely to fall rather than rise, and work conditions to deteriorate, not improve; while his evil success in forcing wages down made him a formidable competitor against the good employer, able to snatch contracts from him and so lessen his well-administered area of employment, or compel him in self-defence to reduce wages against his will. What, again, of the workers in industries in which Trade Unionism had failed to get a footing? There, no organised defence of the employees was possible; with no Union to fight for a living wage, the pressure of competition led employers to whittle down wages to starvation point.

Now the Socialist contended that an alternative system of industry was possible, from which "sweating" could be eliminated, and under which the well-being of the worker would be counted the first necessity. Instead of competition for private profit, he urged co-operation for public advantage. Let the industries on which the health and wealth of the people depended be socialised, i.e. acquired by the Municipality or the

State; then let the Employing-Community, unburdened by the pressure of home competition, do justice to all its workers in respect of wages paid, hours worked, and conditions of toil.

The Socialist went farther. The grimy "Coke-towns" with their dingy streets, their drinking dens and common tawdriness of life, were no fit "homes" for those who lived by honest labour; let the people own the land and build their Cities Beautiful. The lack of food and clothing, fuel and house-room, of time to play as well as work, to think as well as toil, the lack of a rich and growing life of body, mind, and soul, was never meant to be the daily lot of millions; let the nation take in hand her own business, and not leave it to persons seeking private gain; then her children would know life indeed. The grinding poverty of the legion of the labouring poor contrasted sharply with the boundless luxury of the rich who counted work demeaning; let the false contrast end, and usher in the Democratic Work-State in which all should find fit toil, but none should starve, nor any waste their days in lazy luxury.¹

To the artisan of the North the Socialist message came with the fervour of a gospel. One can feel the glow and grip of the preaching in Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England*, published in 1894, of which it is said a quarter of a million copies were sold—a simple proof of the speed of the spread of the new faith.

1875-1879 and 1884-1886 were cycles of very bad trade, and bitter distress abounded. Trade Union leaders who held tenaciously to the narrower view of labour agitation—close bargaining with the masters to obtain an advance or resist a reduction—yet could not fail to see that the Socialist case found support in the sorrowful facts of the times. "In every ship-

¹ A good example of the appeal of the Socialist to the Trade Unionist will be found in *Merrie England*, pp. 199, 200.

building port," said Robert Knight, secretary of the Boilermakers' Society, in his 1886 report, "there are to be seen thousands of idle men vainly seeking for an honest day's work. The privation that has been endured by them, their wives and children, is terrible to contemplate. Sickness has been very prevalent, whilst the hundreds of pinched and hungry faces have told a tale of suffering and privation which no optimism could minimise or conceal. . . . The workman . . . is not blind. . . . He sees the lavish display of wealth in which he has no part. He sees a large and growing class enjoying inherited abundance. He sees miles of costly residences, each occupied by fewer people than are crowded into single rooms of the tenement in which he lives. *He cannot fail to reason that there must be something wrong in a system which effects such unequal distribution of the wealth created by labour.*"

Two young members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Tom Mann and John Burns, unfurled the flag of Socialism within Trade Unionism. They vigorously attacked the policy of the older leaders, their content with Insurance work and with wage-bargaining; denounced the sectionalism of the Trade Union movement, which organised the well-paid skilled grades and usually left the less skilled and unskilled workers outside; emphasised untiringly the solidarity of the working-class; and demanded that Trade Unionism should use its political strength in the cause of Social Democracy.

A series of noteworthy events gave impetus to the propaganda. The Miners' Federation declared in favour of the establishment by law of a Minimum Wage and an Eight Hours' Working Day, proposals far ahead of the thought of the older Unionism. In 1888 Mrs. Annie Besant and the Rev. Stewart Headlam, of the Fabian Society, were elected to the London School Board as Socialists, and, working with Mr. A. G. Cook of the London Society of Compositors, they induced

the Board to declare that all its contractors must in the future pay "fair wages." The newly established London County Council and numerous other public bodies quickly followed suit. In 1888, also under Socialist leadership, the London match-girls struck successfully against the hardships of their lot ; in 1889 the London gas-stokers, organised by Burns, Mann, and Ben Tillet, won a reduction of hours from twelve to eight per day ; and, most famous of all, that year the London dockers, under the same leadership, after a ten weeks' strike, in which they were supported by subscriptions from all over the world, carried their cause to victory.¹ Socialists were doing things hitherto believed impossible. Unskilled labour was winning strikes ; public authorities insisting on "fair wages." Industry was passing into a new world of hope.

The Trade Union Congress could not remain unresponsive to the quickening spirit. The struggle between the old Unionism and the new can be summarised in a few sentences. The Bradford Congress of 1888 broke away from former Congress declarations on the Land Question in favour of Peasant Proprietorship, and definitely declared for Land Nationalisation. The next year at Dundee the Congress might have moved farther, but an attack on the older leaders led to a determined rally in their favour. In 1890 at Liverpool, the Congress, freed from personal considerations, passed a series of resolutions distinctly Socialistic in spirit and aim. How this changed attitude affected the relations of organised labour to politics we are now to see.

¹ The London dockers claimed that (1) no man should be taken on for less than four hours at a time, (2) contract-work and piece-work should be abolished, (3) wages should be raised to 6d. per hour, with 8d. per hour for overtime.

V. LABOUR IN POLITICS

(1892—1911)

The time was ripe for Labour to detach itself from dependence on Liberalism or Conservatism, and enter the world of politics as a distinct and organised host, on a distinct and definite task, "the creation of a Co-operative Commonwealth, founded upon the socialisation of land and capital."¹

The first stage in the new movement was marked by the formation of the Independent Labour Party in 1892-3. Its characteristic aim was to link Socialism with organised labour. "One thing in particular did the new Party see—in fact, it was created to see this thing. Socialism as a political force, and as a creative agency in Great Britain, would remain feeble until it gained the confidence and the co-operation of the industrial organisation of the workers."² The I.L.P. sought accordingly to weld together the Trade Unionist and Socialist movements.

Its characteristic method was the running of candidates for all public bodies—Boards of Guardians, Parish and District and County Councils, and Parliament. The Social Revolution was to be achieved by social evolution. On the anvil of representative government Labour would shape a new social order, could it but wield the hammer of organised voting power. So Parliamentary by-elections in industrial constituencies were fought with vigour; twenty-eight I.L.P. candidates stood, though unsuccessfully, at the General Election of 1895; and at the General Election of 1900

¹ J. Keir Hardie, M.P.; quoted in Ensor's *Modern Socialism*, p. 305. The two articles by Mr. Hardie in *Modern Socialism*, pp. 303-16, are of especial value as statements of the rise of the I.L.P. and of the Labour Party.

² *Socialism*, by J. Ramsay MacDonald, pp. 49-53. The I.L.P. was preceded by the Scottish Labour Party, formed in 1888, and by local Labour Parties in Bradford and Manchester.

the new Party gained its first seat, J. Keir Hardie being returned for Merthyr Tydvil.

In this first stage of Labour's independency came the inevitable rupture between the I.L.P. and the Social Democratic Federation. The latter body, which was of course the older, held strictly to the Marxian position, preaching the class-war, using the phrases of the last generation of Continental Socialism, scornful of the evolutionary methods of the I.L.P. With all its energy, the Social Democratic Federation failed to grip working-class life; the I.L.P., on the contrary, translating the same Socialist idea into terms of British thought and usage, moved from success to success.

The second stage in the new movement was marked by the formation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900. This was the child of the Trade Union Congress, now in fuller sympathy with the new spirit. At the instance of the 1899 Congress a Conference assembled the next year, representative of Trade Unionism, Socialism, and the Co-operative Movement. Out of the Conference grew the Labour Representation Committee, federating Trade Unions, Trades Councils, the I.L.P., and the Fabian Society, Co-operative Societies being also eligible for membership. Its work was to develop Labour representation on public bodies. At the General Election of 1900 two of its nominees were successful, Richard Bell, at Derby, and J. Keir Hardie of the I.L.P., whose election has already been noted. Numerous successes in municipal elections followed, and at Parliamentary by-elections in 1902 and 1903 D. J. Shackleton, Will Crooks, and Arthur Henderson won seats under its auspices.

Unquestionably the House of Lords' decision in 1901 in the Taff Vale Railway case strengthened the Labour appeal to Trade Unionists. By this decision the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was held responsible for the unlawful acts of certain of its members during a strike in South Wales, and the Taff Vale

Railway Company obtained £23,000 damages against the Society. That the corporate funds of a Trade Union could be made answerable for the illegal acts of individual members of the Union was a doctrine striking at the root of Trade Union stability. In self-defence the Unions were compelled to enter politics under the Labour flag to recover their lost position.

By the General Election of 1906 the plans of the Labour Representation Committee had matured. On that tide of democratic feeling thirty of its candidates were carried to victory, and the passage of the Trades Disputes Act in 1906, which safeguarded the Unions against a repetition of the Taff Vale decision, was the firstfruits of the Labour triumph. The same year the title "Labour Representation Committee" was dropped in favour of the simpler name, "The Labour Party." In 1908 another long step towards the fusion of all Labour interests in the new "Labour Party" was taken; the Miners' Federation, and other powerful Trade Unions, which had till then stood aloof, united with it, and their representatives in the Commons, twenty strong, joined the Labour Party, whose strength in the House was thus increased to fifty. The influence of independent labour at Westminster was a powerful factor in the rapid pace of social legislation: the feeding of necessitous school children, the medical examination of all elementary scholars, old age pensions, Trade Boards to supervise "sweated" industries, Labour Exchanges, the extension of "Workmen's Compensation," a Housing and Town Planning Act, a Small Holdings Act, the Children Act, and the famous Budget of 1909-10 are outstanding instances of the response of the Government during the Parliament of 1906-10 to the demand for social betterment.

A fresh menace to Labour's freedom to organise for political ends was the Osborne decision of 1909. After two years' litigation it was laid down that a Trade Union could not enforce a levy on its members to meet

the expenses of Parliamentary—or even municipal—representation.¹ Hampered by this decision, the Labour Party faced the General Election of January 1910, and emerged with a representation reduced to forty. The short Parliament of 1910 was occupied with the struggle between the two Houses of Parliament, and was interrupted by the death of King Edward VII. In the General Election of December 1910, the Labour Party increased its strength to forty-two, and legislation to deal with the issue raised by the Osborne Judgment was promised by the Government.

VI. THE LABOUR WARS OF 1911

The foregoing paragraph indicates the position in the labour world in the early part of 1911. The battle for industrial betterment seemed to have passed from the direct struggle between masters and men to a systematic attempt to reverse the wrongs of Labour by parliamentary action. Few could have suspected that before midsummer the conflict would have returned to the old battlefields, that the strike and the lock-out would reappear as weapons in a struggle waged over a wider area, with an intenser determination, and with unparalleled results. Yet such was the case. The Board of Trade *Labour Gazette* stated that no fewer than 373,615 persons were involved in labour disputes in the month of August 1911; during the same month in the preceding year the number was only 17,359.

A careful review of the labour wars of 1911 shows that while a multitude of industries were more or less directly affected, there were, in the period from June to August, three conspicuous storm centres. The industrial history of those troubled months is dis-

¹ In the case of *Wilson v. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers*, April 1911, the Osborne Judgment was held to prevent Trade Union funds being applied to the costs of *municipal* as well as Parliamentary representation; Boards of Guardians were expressly excluded from this ruling.

played broadly in the tremendous disputes between the seamen and the shipowners, between the transport-workers and their employers, and between the railway men and the directors of the great railway companies. It will therefore be simplest to outline in turn the course of the strike movement in these three vast fields of commerce.

1. *The Seamen's Strikes*

We trace the earliest notice in the press concerning a threatened seamen's strike, about the middle of June. On June 13 the *Manchester Guardian* reported a meeting of delegates of Unions of Belgian transport-employees, at which it was confidently affirmed that an international seamen's strike would begin at Antwerp on June 14 and at English ports on June 19. It was also stated that labour leaders on the Clyde and in Liverpool regarded a strike as probable. The next day's news was that a handbill had been distributed among sailors at Liverpool docks worded thus, "Warning. It may be to-morrow." On June 15 the press reported that the seamen's strike had begun. The claims of the men were for recognition of their Union, higher wages, and a Conciliation Board to settle disputes. For some days the strike fever was only sporadic; vessels were held up at Southampton, Liverpool, on the Clyde, and at Bristol Channel ports. A few of the largest Liverpool shipping firms conceded higher wages, but the general belief among the employers was that the agitation would soon die out. A prominent official of the Shipping Federation was reported as saying, "The agitation is looked upon as one likely to affect particular ports for a time, but no general movement is feared. It is rather funny to know that the men who are causing what local trouble there is, are posing as restraining the impetuosity of would-be strikers."¹

¹ *Westminster Gazette*, June 14, 1911.

But as the days passed by it was seen that the determination of the men to gain redress was stiffening. The agitation spread. Soon every port of the United Kingdom was affected, and, what was more momentous, other sections of labour manifested determination to aid the seamen. "Sympathetic strikes" became frequent. On June 23, for instance, the dockers at Hull struck in sympathy with the seamen, and Hull docks stood idle. There was a further drastic development at Liverpool the next day; Mr. Tom Mann, who came to Liverpool to organise the strike, at the instance of the Transport-Workers' Federation, announced that all Union sailors, firemen, cooks and stewards would be withdrawn from the boats of firms associated with the Shipping Federation. Each day witnessed extensions of the strike area.

The first effective step toward settlement was taken at Hull, where fierce riots had broken out. Mr. Askwith, representing the Board of Trade, intervened, and in a series of Conferences with representatives from both sides, paved the way for an arrangement. On July 3 a settlement was reached at Hull and at Liverpool upon the basis of increased wages and the recognition of the men's Union. At these ports the seamen had won.

On the Tyne and Clyde the situation remained unchanged. The scene of interest, however, was soon transferred to the ports of South Wales. On July 19 there were riotous scenes in the streets of Cardiff, and metropolitan police were drafted into the city. Mr. Havelock Wilson, Secretary of the Seamen's Union, urged the Cardiff strikers to refrain from riots and trust to the weapon of the strike. The "sympathetic strike" movement was soon strongly manifested. At Cardiff Docks work came to a standstill, as coal trimmers, hobblers, cargo-men, pit-wood carriers, and others left their work in support of the seamen and to demand redress of their own grievances. At Newport

and Barry all sections of dock labour followed suit. A general stoppage of industry was threatened throughout South Wales. Since the docks were idle, collieries necessarily closed down, and it was reported that 100,000 colliers were unemployed. An attempt to ship a Chinese crew at Cardiff roused bitter feeling, and Chinese laundries in various parts of the city were raided and destroyed. Day by day huge processions of strikers marched through the main streets to demonstrations in the city parks. The seamen won their fight on July 23, gaining recognition for their Union, and an advance in wages, but still stood out, asserting their resolve not to return to work until the grievances of all other sections of the strikers had been redressed. That was the common compact among the strikers. The general settlement was not reached until July 25, when the following basis of agreement was accepted: all the trade unions involved were to be recognised, the strikers to be reinstated and no legal proceedings to be instituted against them, while the grievances in the various branches of industry were to be settled at Conferences to be arranged speedily between representatives of the masters and the men.

2. *The Strikes of Transport-Workers*

It has already been shown that at Hull, Cardiff, and elsewhere, workers in the transport industries struck in sympathy with the seamen, and that by gradual stages the seamen secured the concessions which they sought. If seamen, whose Union was weak, and whose irregular mode of life had placed them at the mercy of the Shipping Federation, could carry their case to victory, why not the workers in other industries concerned in the transit of goods? They, too, had their grievances—low wages, long hours, and the refusal of the employers to recognise their Unions. So it came to pass that at almost every port the seamen's strike broadened out into a general

strike of transport-workers. At Manchester early in July, and in London early in August, the whole of the carrying industries were paralysed, as "down tools" became the order of the day. On July 4 about 5,000 carters, it was said, were on strike in Manchester alone, including some members of the General Railway Workers' Union. The Manchester goods stations were closely picketed. Vans which attempted to convey goods were stopped, the horses taken out of the shafts, and in some cases the vans overturned in the street. Minor scuffles with the police were frequent. Military were sent into Salford, but the Lord Mayor of Manchester declined to call soldiers to his aid, relying upon the police force and upon the good sense of the citizens. Mr. Askwith came to Manchester on July 6, at the instance of the Board of Trade, and repeated the success which had characterised his endeavours at Hull. On July 10 a general settlement of the Manchester strike was announced. Seamen and firemen received an advance of 10s. per month, carters in charge of one-horse vans had their weekly wage increased to 25s., carters of two-horse vans to 27s., dockers were assured a minimum wage of 5s. for a nine-hours day, and all the Unions were recognised by the employers.

The events in Manchester were repeated in London in the next month on a much larger scale. On August 1 there were sectional strikes of dock workers and coal porters, the men going out against the counsel of their leaders, who were still in negotiation with the employers. Each day the area of dispute widened rapidly. On August 2 it was reported that 12,000 men engaged in dock-labour were out; on August 3, 20,000, including large bodies of watermen and lightermen. The vast carrying industries of the metropolis were quickly affected, for the dockers were joined by the carmen, who claimed a shorter working week and a living wage. There were tempestuous street scenes when the

strikers stopped such vans as were still at work, unhorsed them, or turned them back to the goods yards. Outstanding exceptions were made in the case of the transport of ice to the London hospitals, the disposal of sewage, and the carrying of water-borne coal for the purposes of the London water supply—exceptions expressly sanctioned by the Strike Committee. By August 9 it was estimated that at least 80,000 transport-workers were on strike in the metropolis. Conciliation Conferences worked hard and long to settle the tangle of disputes. On August 11 a settlement with the carmen was reached ; by this agreement hours of labour were reduced, so that a six-days working week which should not exceed 72 hours was to be the limit, and 14 hours to be the longest working day, while a wage scale ranging from 27s. to 31s. was conceded. Though their strike was settled, the carmen remained out until a settlement was shortly afterwards reached with the dockers, lightermen, and other sections of labour affected.

3. *The Strikes of Railway Men*

The transport-workers' strike led inevitably to unrest and strife on the railways. The relation of railway men to the successful transport-workers was so close that at many points, as the *Nation* indicated, they were indistinguishable.

Two van drivers are in the habit of carting goods from a railway yard ; one is the servant of a public carrier, a cartage contractor or a coal merchant ; the other is employed by the railway company or its agent. The former is a transport-worker ; he was on strike with the transport-workers ; he gets an enviable increase. The latter (though doing virtually identical work) is a railway worker ; he was outside the transport strike ; on its morrow he has no increase. What wonder if he strike too ? And if he does, why not other railway servants ? Practically all the local railway strikes this summer have begun in the goods yard, and nearly all with the carmen.¹

¹ August 19, 1911.

At Hull, Manchester, Liverpool, Birkenhead, and then in London, men employed in the railway goods-yards struck. The principal claim was for recognition of their Unions as a means to more effective and speedy betterment of the conditions of labour. In some places definite claims for shorter hours and increased wages were also formulated. The first acute stage of the railway strike movement was on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway; but every line in the country was soon more or less deeply involved. Liverpool became the earliest scene of a complete extension of the trouble. All railway lines touching the port were affected. The city's traffic was paralysed. Hooliganism, an unhappy characteristic of certain Liverpool areas, broke loose, and strong bodies of military forces were drafted in from other towns. Their presence was deeply resented. On Sunday, August 13, unparalleled scenes were witnessed. A huge meeting of 70,000 workers on strike was held near St. George's Hall. The speeches of the leaders though determined were not inflammatory, and the meeting closed peacefully. Suddenly, on the fringe of the crowd conflict broke out between the police and bystanders. A peaceful assembly was transformed in a few moments into a mob of fugitives rushing anywhere to escape the charges of the police. The following sentences from the *Manchester Guardian*¹ graphically describe the shameful conflict:

In the centre of the square the fight raged fiercely round the lorries which served as platforms for the leaders, who were now seeing their plans for peace flung to the winds. . . . Even when the crowd was separated into groups the police continued their onslaught. They used their truncheons mercilessly, and some could be seen taking deliberate aim at the backs of men's heads before giving them blows which, despite the din, could be heard yards away.

It was when nearly all the crowd had been dispersed

¹ August 14, 1911.

that the worst scene of all occurred, and that brutal, unnecessary blows were struck by some policemen, mostly young and probably inexperienced. The steps of the Hall had been crowded with men and a few women interested in the demonstration. The orders given for the steps to be cleared led to incredible scenes. At the top is a wide stone platform with iron railings to protect the ends, where there is a sheer drop of twelve feet. When the police charged up the steps they had the people congregated there in a trap from which escape could be effected only by dropping through the railings to the flags below. Hundreds realised that this was the only thing to do, but in a few seconds the policemen had won their way to the railings, and the men, women, and young boys and girls were pushed past them and over the edge as rapidly and continually as water down a steep rock. The officers could be seen using their truncheons like flails. Dozens of heads were broken and many shoulders and arms received blows, the marks of which will remain for many a long day. And of those who escaped the blows many were hurt by the fall. It was a display of violence that horrified those who saw it.

The fight and flight were all over in a quarter of an hour, but with that narrow space of time one policeman was killed, and 200 persons were more or less seriously injured.

For a week or more Liverpool was in a state of civil war. The area of the strike was suddenly enlarged, on August 15, by the drastic action of the Liverpool shipowners. Small bodies of dock labourers, repudiating the advice of their leaders, had not accepted the general dock settlement of the preceding month. Probably not more than 200 were still standing out, when the shipowners suddenly locked-out all the dock labourers of the port, and 20,000 dockers were thrown out of employment. The Liverpool Joint Strike Committee replied by ordering a general strike of the transport-workers of the port, an order which was immediately obeyed. The commerce of Liverpool came to a standstill; goods could neither leave the city nor be brought into it. Food supplies ran short and food

prices rapidly rose. The city was within measurable reach of actual famine. There were fierce riotings on August 15, and two persons were shot dead by the military. As a precautionary measure, the magistrates issued an order closing all licensed houses at 2 p.m. daily.

While these events were happening in Liverpool, almost the whole country was plunged into fresh industrial conflict by the national extension of the railway strike. First, Manchester railway porters refused to handle goods from Liverpool. Then Manchester signalmen came out. On every railway line, and in every grade of labour, there were rapid developments of the trouble. The general position in the railway world was this. Four years earlier, in November 1907, a threatened national railway strike was averted by the intervention of the Board of Trade; the railway companies and the men then accepted a scheme of conciliation and arbitration suggested by the Board. This scheme was to remain in operation for seven years. It was now contended by the men that vexatious delays, large expense, and general ineffectiveness attended the machinery for conciliation. For instance, it was stated later, in evidence before the Railway Commission, that on the L. & N.W.R. "it took twelve months from the first stage of presenting proposals to the directors before the men obtained a final decision from the Arbitration Court"; another official of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants said that the working of the machinery of Conciliation had cost his Society alone, in round figures, £30,000 since 1907.

On August 16 the Railway Unions issued their ultimatum; unless representatives of the companies would meet representatives of the Unions within 24 hours, the Unions would declare a national railway stoppage. Once more the Board of Trade intervened. The executives of the Railway Unions were summoned to London to discuss the crisis with members of the

Government. The outcome of the discussion was an offer by the Government of a Royal Commission to investigate the grievances of railway employees. A Royal Commission is a notoriously protracted mode of gathering evidence, and the men's leaders unhesitatingly rejected the proposal. A subsequent statement made by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons showed that the proposal of the Government was intended to refer to a small Board of Inquiry, whose proceedings should begin without delay, instead of to a Royal Commission as ordinarily understood. Negotiations were resumed. The situation was extremely critical. Not less than 140,000 railway employees were already on strike.¹ Despite the guarding of the stations and the lines by the military—a course against which labour leaders hotly protested—on nearly all the chief railways ordinary traffic was suspended. The new offer of the Government was accepted by the men on August 21, and, with the exception of the North-Eastern Railway Company, the strike at once ended on all the lines. Guarantees were given that the strikers should be reinstated and no legal proceedings instituted. The promised special Committee of Inquiry was constituted by August 23. It comprised five members, Sir David Harrell (Chairman), Sir T. Ratcliffe Ellis, Mr. C. Gabriel Beale, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., and Mr. J. Burnett. Its terms of reference were, "To investigate the working of the Railway Conciliation and Arbitration scheme signed on behalf of the principal Railway Companies and of three Trade Unions of railway employees at the Board of Trade on November 6, 1907, and to report what changes (if any) are desirable with a view to the prompt and satisfactory settlement of differences." Unhappily, on the very day when agreement was reached serious rioting broke out at Llanelly, nine persons being killed and many injured. A statement

¹ Board of Trade *Labour Gazette*, September 1911.

issued by the Home Office attributed the outbreak to hooligans, not to strikers: "the military officers reported," said the Home Office, "that the railway men were not themselves responsible for the rioting at Llanelly."

The next day saw the close of the last of the great English strikes of the summer, the joint strike in Liverpool. Agreement had been reached on all the questions at issue except the reinstatement of a small body of tramway-men. This closing incident of the English strikes dramatically set forth the chief characteristic of the struggles, namely, the solidarity of labour. Sixty-six thousand Liverpool transport-workers and others refused to return to work, although their own grievances had been disposed of, until the Tramways Committee promised to reinstate "as and when required," 250 tramwaymen who had come out in sympathy with the strikers of the port.

4. *The Causes and Characteristics of the Strikes*

An unreflective article in the *Times*, at the height of the strike movement, attributed the strikes to the workmen's whim to be free from work in the abnormal period of fine summer weather!

The actual causes were far more deeply rooted. The workmen saw the cost of living steadily increasing; food and house rent were dearer: while this increasing expenditure had to be met out of a practically stationary income, for wages failed to rise step by step with the increasing cost of family life. This was bad enough; what made the matter worse was that the workmen could not fail to see that while no escape from poverty was offered them, there was nevertheless an increasing scale of luxury and extravagance amongst the rich. Somehow, the industrial system was working badly. The manual

toiler found life harder, the capitalist class grew in wealth and added pleasure to pleasure.

This was the real root of the trouble. Take for example the case of the railway men. A letter published in the *Times* from Mr. W. T. Layton set the statistical facts in bold relief. The *Nation* commented on Mr. Layton's letter in these terms :

It appears that between 1896 and 1909 (the last year for which a figure of wages is obtainable) the average wages paid to railwaymen in the United Kingdom rose by some 6 per cent. During the same period retail prices rose over 17 per cent. The difference measures the extent to which the railwaymen's position has been changed for the worse during a period which has, for the nation as whole, been one of economic prosperity. If we look a little closer into the figures, we see that the trouble has only been accentuated in the latter years of the period. If we compare 1900 with 1909, we find a rise of 8 per cent. in prices, as against about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in money wages. If, lastly, we compare 1906 with 1909 we find an actual fall in wages accompanying a rise of nearly 5 per cent. in prices. So far it is clear that the railway servants have fully shared in the general deterioration by which the working class have been affected owing to the rise of prices and the stagnation of money wages. If from the movements of the figures we turn to the actual wages themselves, we find that, excluding boys and men whose wages are swollen by tips, there must be, if Mr. Layton is right, at least eighty thousand men in the employment of the railways whose normal weekly wage is twenty shillings or less. This estimate is based on a census taken in 1907, since which it would appear that money wages have fallen slightly, so that there is no reason to think that the position has shown any tendency to improve.¹

When the wage rates of certain grades of railway employees are stated, the keen determination of the men to right their wrongs will be better understood. In a Report issued by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants it is stated that the average wage of

¹ August 26, 1911.

shunters was 24s. 2d., of firemen 24s., of ticket collectors and carmen 21s. 6d., of goods porters 19s. 6d., of platelayers 19s. 4d., and there were even lower-paid grades of railway labour.

What was true of railway servants was also true, with the necessary changes, of the other branches of disaffected labour. A member of the Strike Committee in Manchester defined the object of the Manchester strike movement as being to assure to unskilled labour a minimum wage of £1 a week!

The outstanding characteristics of the strike movement were two.

First, the strikes originated from below not from above, that is, from the rank and file rather than at the mandate of their leaders. The explanation is that the sufferings entailed by economic injustice were felt more keenly by the manual workers than by their own paid organising agents.

Secondly, the strikes revealed in a new and sensational way the solidarity of British labour. To what extent the Syndicalism of the Continent was the model of the "Industrial Unionism" preached by Mr. Tom Mann and his colleagues, it is premature to say. As to the fact that labour fought and won its battle because it was a united host, the records of the preceding pages bear abundant witness.

We have passed (as the *Westminster Gazette* said) at a step from the old localised strife to the swift, sudden, and combined movement of the allied trades. Instead of one union or one branch of it calling out its men, and supporting them with strike pay while they press their demands on a particular master or group of masters, we have a large number of loosely organised trades ceasing work together over a wide area. Whereas the localised strike depended on its funds or on assistance from other men in work for a prolonged effort until the masters were worn down, the general strike relies on a sudden surprise movement leading swiftly to a situation in which masters must give in or the Government interfere.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEALS OF BRITISH DEMOCRACY

I. A STATEMENT OF IDEALS

WHAT are the ideals of British Democracy? We have watched its rise from impotence to power, from the dark days of the Industrial Revolution to the dawn of the Collective Age. It should be possible, after so extended a survey, to state tersely the governing aims of the Democratic Movement and the goal it has in view.

One word of explanation must precede. Such a statement will comprise both immediate purposes and ultimate ideals. Democracy, like Jacob, dreams, and its ladder of hope, like his, is set up on the earth, but the top of it reaches to heaven. So the programme which follows concerns the day that now is, and The Day that is to be. It is practical and practicable; it is also visionary and prophetic. Temperament, environment, education, and experience go to decide which elements make the strongest appeal to the individual.

The statement of the aims and ideals of British Democracy is threefold:

1. *A Minimum Standard of Life to be Assured to All.*—This is the significance of Trade Unionism and of legislation touching wages, hours of labour, health, and elementary education.

2. *A Maximum Standard of Life to be Sought for All.*—This is the significance of Socialism; of the

Socialist's hatred of the tawdry, sordid lot of the workers, of his insistence on higher education for all; and of the growing alliance of sympathy between the Socialist and the Christian, for both have seen a vision of the Life Glorious.

3. *Internationalism : the Awakening to the Essential Oneness of Humanity.*—This was the significance of the message of Marx, "Workers of all countries, unite!" the significance also of the periodical International Congresses of Trade Unionists and of Socialists; the inwardness of Democracy's deepening hatred of war as fratricidal.

II. A MINIMUM STANDARD OF LIFE TO BE ASSURED TO ALL

How the Industrial Revolution degraded the Standard of Life of the workers, and how in their misery they drew together in Trade Unions, has been told. They were doggedly opposed, not only by manufacturers and investors eager for undiminished dividends, but by the Political Economists of the day. Economic theories, now in the main abandoned, then inspired legislators and capitalists with angry hostility to the Unions, and contempt for their claims. It was confidently taught that the sum available at any given time for wages was predetermined; hence if one group of workers secured a higher wage they did so at the expense of another and weaker group; while from the trade in which the higher wage was paid capital would be scared away, and a fall in wage, or unemployment, would inevitably follow; and, still more baffling for the workers, Malthus could be quoted to testify that the "prudential restraint" which poverty placed on parentage would be relaxed if wages rose, and with the increase of family expenses, the last state of the labourer become worse than the first.¹

¹ See Chapter I. of Part III. of Webb's *Industrial Democracy*, "The Verdict of the Economists."

Even as late as 1874, Professor Cairnes, writing of the predetermined and sensitive Wage Fund, and of the contentions of Malthus, wrote :¹

Against these barriers Trade Unions must dash themselves in vain. They are not to be broken through or eluded by any combination however universal ; for they are the barriers set by Nature herself.

And again, after making a favourable exception in the case of the Co-operative Movement, he continued :

The margin for the possible improvement of the (workers') lot is confined within narrow barriers which cannot be passed, and the probability of their elevation is hopeless. As a body they will not rise at all. A few more energetic, or more fortunate, than the rest, will from time to time escape, as they do now from the ranks of their fellows to the higher walks of industrial life, but the great majority will remain substantially where they are. The remuneration of labour, as such, skilled or unskilled, can never rise much above its present level.

The Professor in his study saw the world from one point of view, the labourer, "clemmed" for food, saw it from another, and hunger shattered theory. For a century the workers and their allies struggled, through Parliament and through their Unions, to restore a minimum Standard of Life for all. Four lines of advance are distinguishable : a Minimum Standard is sought in respect of Wages, Leisure, Healthful Environment, and Education.

1. *A Minimum Standard of Real Wages.*—Under this head may be grouped, first, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and other Free Trade measures which cheapened the necessaries of life, and so increased purchasing power ; second, Trade Union or Government Insurance against sickness, accident, unemployment, and old age, for such provisions sustain purchasing power when actual wages slacken or cease ; third, the Labour claim

¹ *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded*, pp. 338 and 348.

of "The Right to Work," i.e. the right to earn wages and honestly sustain life ; and, fourth, definite schemes to secure a Living Wage, such as the "Fair Wages" clause now generally enforced by public bodies, and the "Trade Boards Act of 1909," which set up machinery to fix a Minimum Wage in selected sweated industries.

An immense field of redress is still unoccupied. Hundreds of thousands of casual labourers, with their families, exist on uncertain earnings, supplemented by Poor Law relief and charity ; until unskilled labour is decasualised it must remain a prolific cause of destitution. Women and girl wage-earners are normally underpaid, often to a scandalous degree. Whole classes of adult male labour, more or less skilled, more or less organised, live on the verge of the poverty line ; in the great industrial armies of shop assistants and clerks there are multitudes whose grievances are far more substantial than their incomes.

The attitude of Labour is expressed in the resolution which follows, moved by Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., on April 26, 1911, in the House of Commons :

"That the right of every family in the country to an income sufficient to enable it to maintain its members in decency and comfort should be recognised, and this House is therefore of opinion that a general minimum of 30s. a week for every adult worker should be established by law, and also declares that the Government should set an example by adopting this standard in its own workshops."

Another indication of the attitude of Labour is the claim made in the I.L.P. Programme for "the provision of work to all capable adult applicants at recognised Trade Union rates, *with a statutory minimum of 6d. per hour.*"

2. *A Minimum Standard of Leisure.*—Hard, exhausting labour for men, women, and children, with no other limit than physical endurance, or the employer's convenience, was the common rule a century ago ; from

bed to work, from work to bed, with only Sunday's rest to lighten life's drudgery. Slowly, and at first in the face of stubborn opposition, a code of laws was built up to reserve to the worker a margin of leisure. A long line of Factory Acts and Regulations is the standing witness to the activity of law and administration in limiting hours of labour in mines, factories, workshops, warehouses, laundries, and retail stores, for workers of both sexes and of all ages. The latest links in the chain are the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1908, restricting the miner's underground working-day to eight hours, and the Shop Hours Bill of 1911, reducing the long hours of labour of shop assistants.

Very wide is the area of overtoil still unsupervised by law. The hours of railway, tram, and 'bus employees are often inhumanly long. In the thousand small "sweated" trades which cluster in the East End of London, in Birmingham, and elsewhere, women and children make shirts, card buttons and hooks-and-eyes, fasten bristles in brushes, stitch at cheap clothing, and so on, as long as weary fingers can ply and tired eyes keep open. Even in skilled and organised industries, where the normal working-week is fixed, when trade is brisk, systematic "overtime" depletes life of leisure.

Democracy's claim is that there shall be "a national minimum of leisure and recreation secured by law to every citizen. It will be an implied contract of employment, rigidly enforced by law, that it shall leave untouched sixteen hours out of each twenty-four for needful sleep, recreation, exercise of mind and body, and the duties of citizenship and family life."¹

3. *A Minimum Standard of Healthful Environment.*—Within our lifetime Public Health has become a national care of the first importance. Local Health Authorities now provide for scavenging and sewerage, the water

¹ S. & B. Webb, in Ensor's *Modern Socialism*, p. 110.

supply, the detection and treatment of infectious disease, and kindred tasks, appointing highly skilled Medical Officers of Health to oversee these activities. Another line of advance is represented by the recent Acts for the feeding of necessitous school children (1906), and the medical inspection of all elementary scholars (1909). A third method is seen in the Housing and Town Planning Act (1909), authorising County Councils to close dwellings unfit for habitation, to provide new houses for the working-classes, and to prepare Town Planning schemes so as to assure that new suburbs are built with due regard to public health and advantage. A fourth way of hope is the State System of Insurance (1911) against sickness and—to a more limited extent—against unemployment, with its accompanying provisions for health lectures, maternity allowances, and sanatoria for tubercular patients.

The Campaign against Disease has fairly begun. To enumerate its present plans is to disclose the vastness of its future projects. Children, the citizens of to-morrow, to be regarded as the nation's fairest treasure; homes healthful, and unhaunted by the spectre of want; villages and cities wholesome and fair: such is Democracy's ideal. The gutter-child, the dingy alleys of the myriad poor, the towns whence "enterprise" has ousted health and beauty, deny its dream. A century in which money was honoured beyond man explains our heritage of grime and need to-day.

4. *A Minimum Standard of Education*.—We have noted briefly the growth of a national system of education.¹ To far-seeing democrats the School is central to plans for the future. Everything the future citizen ought to be physically, mentally, morally, the School by its discipline should prepare him to be.² The

¹ Page 6.

² The difficult question of religious teaching in State Schools arises here. The democratic claim respecting education, represented by the programme of the I.L.P., is for "Free, *secular, moral*, primary, secondary, and university education, with free maintenance while

Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission expresses the view of Labour, for it was signed by two Labour representatives, Francis Chandler and George Lansbury, and endorsed later by the Co-operative Congress and the Independent Labour Party.

The Minority Commissioners hold that children should not leave school for employment until fifteen years of age, and that from fifteen to eighteen employment should be so limited that education could be continued at suitable Trade Schools for thirty hours per week. At the Trade School a youth would gain, before the age of eighteen, "an education of hand, eye, and brain; a practical ability to use competently the ordinary tools; a knowledge of drawing, practical geometry, and workshop arithmetic; and even a groundwork of training in particular handicrafts, such as few even of duly indentured apprentices get."¹ For girls from fifteen to eighteen there should be attendance for half-time at educational courses in which physical training, domestic economy, and household management, including the rearing of infants, would find place. A wide reorganisation of industry is involved in the proposals, but under-education inflicts too heavy costs on national life to be sanctioned as a permanent policy.

III. A MAXIMUM STANDARD OF LIFE TO BE SOUGHT FOR ALL

A critic might fairly urge that already we have passed the frontier of a *Minimum* Standard of Life. Between 30s. a week, an Eight-Hours Working-Day, healthful homes, an enlarged and enriched education—

at school or university." It is obvious that "secular" excludes denominational religious teaching; "moral" is not inconsistent with the reading of the Bible, and emphasis by the teacher on its ethical teaching.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws*, pp. 1216, 1190-2.

between these proposals and the everyday experience of millions there is a great gulf fixed. When Mr. Will Crooks moved his resolution in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade stated that of 3,600,000 adults of whose wage-earnings there was statistical knowledge *sixty per cent.* were working for less than 30s. a week !

The Socialist, whose ideal now concerns us, asserts that the great gulf can be spanned, the toilers and their families safeguarded against poverty, and that far beyond this "Minimum" lies a territory of expansive human experience where body, mind, and soul may reach full stature. The "Minimum" is not the Socialist's goal. It is but on the way to the Maximum Standard of Life he seeks for all. How he thinks to win this, and what order of society he foresees, will be clear as we discuss in turn (1) the modern drift toward Socialism, (2) the Socialist State and the way to it, (3) the Socialist Ideal, and (4) the Ideal of the After-Age.

1. *The Modern Drift toward Socialism.*—The problem of the workers' elevation is "hopeless," wrote Professor Cairnes in 1874. "As a body they will not rise at all." Yet even before 1874 a fresh current of thought was impelling statesmen to disprove this doctrine. Take the care of child-life as the example. In the bad old days children toiled in factories from dawn till after dusk, worked underground, grew up distorted, uneducated, almost dehumanised ; commercialism crippled their bodies and stifled their souls. What happened ? The nation began to intervene, then kept on intervening. Acts of Parliament shortened the child's working-day, forbade specific unhealthy employments. Four years before Cairnes's "hopeless" outburst, William Edward Forster's Elementary Education Act opened a new era for child-life ; in 1880 Mundella's Act made school attendance compulsory ; in 1891 a Unionist Government declared elementary education

free; in 1906 a Radical Government legalised the feeding of hungry school children at the public cost, and in 1909 provided for the medical inspection of elementary scholars. For the sake of the children, or, in other words, for the sake of its own future, the State interfered, asserted in deed that commerce must be subordinate to Humanity, that children must be educated and healthy. To effect all this it exerted control over industry by Factory and Mines Regulation Acts, and finally took over education as a State business, establishing thousands of schools, employing tens of thousands of teachers, instructing millions of children.

Here is the factor to which Cairnes failed to give due value. Regard the workers' powers as limited to "Collective Bargaining," make their wages dependent on the fortunes of war in the struggle for business, and it is true that "the margin for possible improvement . . . is confined within narrow barriers." But recognise that there is another alternative, that a *social* conscience can be roused to revolt against the wrongs imposed on Labour, a *social* will exercised in redress, that *society as a whole* can, if needs be, take over and direct the activities on which social well-being depends—as in the immense business of Education—and then all things are possible. It is on this tendency, the use of social power for moral ends, that the Socialist counts. The tendency is recognisable in modern legislation, irrespective of party; Unionist and Radical contributed to the nationalising of Education, and the extension of its scope. Life more and more passes under social control, industry under social ownership. Sometimes for efficiency's sake the area of State ownership is enlarged, as when the telephone system was completely nationalised in 1911. Sometimes at the bidding of social justice a step is taken, as in the case of Education.

The truth is that the nation's fortune is at stake

in its every living unit, the adult and the child, the healthy and the sick, the worker and the workless, the workshy and the overworked. For the sake of all, that justice may be done to all, the nation is increasingly impelled to control commerce with stringency, and itself assume larger responsibilities as Owner and Employer. This is what the Socialist means by the modern drift toward Socialism.

2. *The Socialist State and the Way to It.*—The Socialist, like other men, recognises this drift; but to him it is no aimless tendency, it is a purposeful current. Winds of heaven have set in flow its healing waters, and the ice-locked isles of Mammon's realm will thaw in gladness at its touch. Winter's grip must fail; springtime, with rush of sap and swell of bud and burst of blossom, comes to Man again.

The State awakens. No longer may the few, unchallenged, exploit the resources of all, while the many tremble on the verge of want. The rule of units passes, the rule of the Unity comes. Social consciousness is reborn. Nature's gifts to men were for mankind. The land, with wealth of ore and store of food and hidden hoards of warmth and beauty; air, water, and wonder of sunshine; life of beast and fish and bird; joy of the orchard and praise of the harvest-field; power of man to dream and plan and seek out many inventions: who created these, and for whose service? The gambler in stocks and shares? The millionaires of Europe and America? The simplicity of Hebrew faith made better answer: "*God* said, Let the earth bring forth. . . . Let us make man."

The primitive gifts of Providence were for the delight of all. There is no shortage in Nature; neither in food, fuel, clothing-stuffs, nor space for human habitation. The fatal error is in the distribution of the fruits of labour. In the strong and wholesome current of thought, which aims to restore to all the possession and enjoyment of earth's common treasures, the Socialist

sees a return to a simpler, holier mode of life, and an escape from the bondage in which the masses live. For "if liberty is conditioned, he who controls the conditions controls the liberty."¹ Right through the industrial history of the past century and a quarter we have seen that the possessors of the instruments of life could and did determine the Standard of Life. The machine-owning capitalist dictated terms to the factory-hand, the land-owning employer to the labourer. When the workers forged the weapon of Trade Unionism, capitalists devised a similar and stronger weapon, "combinations" among themselves. To-day, after nearly a century of Trade Unionist activity, capitalism is strongly entrenched. Mr. Chiozza Money has shown that while between the years 1900 and 1908 industrial profits increased 12½ per cent., wages advanced only 1 per cent.; but the cost of food and rent rose (by the London scale) 9 per cent. The wage-advances won by the strikers in 1911 did little more than give back to them the purchasing power of wages a decade before.

My own view (writes Mr. Chiozza Money) is that the massing of capital in large units has so considerably strengthened the hands of capital in its dealings with labour, that in recent years Trade Unions have comparatively lost much ground. To-day the masters in many of our industries can exercise collective powers much more effectively than Trade Unions. Combination among employers in some trades has reached a point at which it has become possible to rule alike the price of products and the price of labour.²

Under capitalism the struggle to live intensifies. Under communal ownership, the Socialist argues, the economic Standard of Life will be restored and enriched. This may seem a bold statement, for while it is true that a "Fair Wage clause" operates in the State Departments and under most Muni-

¹ *The Socialist Movement*, J. Ramsay MacDonald, p. 135.

² *Riches and Poverty* (new and revised edition), pp. ix. x.

cialties, unskilled labour is largely unorganised, has no "Union" rate to enforce; and it would be easy to cite instances of present under-payment of labourers and other workers in State and municipal employ. Yet the assertion stands. Under the competitive régime Capital and Labour are hostile; the Trust confronts the Trade Union, the "lock-out" is the reply to the threatened strike. But under Socialism employer and employees have one end to serve—the common welfare. The State and the People will not be opposed as are Capital and Labour now. The Democratic Work-State, whose foundations are laid, whose fabric is arising, is our Industrial Self. It will be what we will it to be. That is the significance of the Crooks resolution in the House of Commons.¹ Wages, hours, work-conditions must conform to the requirements of the social conscience. The impress of this demand is already on the rising social order, even in these transition days. The Socialist State of the Future, as the organ of the Will of the People, will express in its industrial relationships what the common judgment directs.

What is the way to the Socialist State? The nation is treading it. Or to revert to an earlier figure, the framework of Local and Imperial Government is the scaffolding within which the structure of the Socialist State steadily rises. Our Parliament and our Councils—County and Borough, District and Parish—at the call of public need continually expand their industrial activities. It is a commonplace to speak of Municipal housing schemes, parks, recreation grounds, allotments, small holdings, public streets and highways, Town Planning proposals; but they all enlarge the fraction of land in national ownership, and widen the margin of industry collectively administered. So with Municipal trams and light railways, gas and electric lighting, baths and washhouses and water-supplies;

¹ Page 119.

so with the Public Health services, their staff of medical officers, their sanitation and sewerage works, slaughter-houses and markets, hospitals, asylums, burial-grounds ; so with the Public Education services, their army of teachers, schools by the thousand, training colleges, libraries, reading-rooms ; so with the Public Defence services, the police, the Army and the Navy, their courts of justice, barracks and training-grounds, dock-yards ; so with the Public Communication services, postal and telegraphic and telephonic, their legion of clerks, operators, messengers : never a year passes but, in one sphere or another, the public interest compels extensions of collective trading and control. Along the line of collective provisions for the needy, untainted by pauperism, the doctrine of State responsibility also impels to action : Old Age Pensions and State Insurance schemes are commanding examples. Finally, modern modes of taxation, adopted to meet the increasing cost of the enlarging area of State activity, command Socialist assent ; graded " Death Duties," a higher tax-rate for " unearned " incomes, a super-tax on very large incomes, the taxation of " unearned increment," all tend to lessen the inequalities of fortune which spring from the private ownership of the means of life.

" The Socialist State, when land and capital will be held by the community, and used for the well-being of the community, and when the exchange of commodities will be organised also by the community, so as to secure the highest possible standard of life for the individual,"¹ is in the making.

3. *The Socialist Ideal*.—" To secure the highest possible standard of life for the individual " is the Socialist Ideal. Life under capitalism gropes on low levels. The very poor are half-starved. Millions drudge at coarsening toil, subsist on " sweated " pay, charity, and Poor Law relief. Skilled artisans, small

¹ I.L.P. Programme.

traders, "middle-class" folk, dwell on the brink of insecurity; the unexpected may any day be their undoing. Men who make money in trade toil hard and long, wasting life in winning the means of life; men who make money in speculation, by wit or luck, reap where others have toilsomely sown. At both ends of the social scale are the parasites: the idle rich, the ultimate payment for whose luxury is the misery of the poor; the lazy vagrant, who preys on ignorance and kindness. If systems, like individuals, are to be judged "by their fruits," the modern, competitive scramble for gain stands self-condemned.

Over against this rise richer ideals. A worthier way of life is seen. In the first place, under the Socialist State *there will remain no sanctions for idleness*. They are Socialists who to-day urge the "Right to Work." But while work is necessary and noble, not *all* work is such. In the Co-operative Commonwealth the machine will be the friend of man, not his rival; and the progress of invention will inevitably shorten the average working-day, and diminish coarse, dehumanising toil. Further, from a socially organised State, in which the natural sources of wealth are publicly owned and used for the public advantage, where all hale adults work, where the necessities of life are produced to meet ascertained need, *economic poverty will disappear*. For the children and the aged and the sick there will be full and due communal care; for the workers adequate wages; for the would-be idle an enforced discipline of toil. And finally, with the passing of economic poverty and with the winning of a margin of leisure, *enrichment of mental and moral life will be possible to all*. Nowadays most people spend the vital energies in a ceaseless struggle to keep living; in the Collective Age, with its release from the baneful necessity of treating one's fellows as foes—fighting for the same trade or situation—and its priceless gift of time to *live*, the mind will grow, the soul aspire. When soil and climate suit the

seedling, it springs to strength and beauty ; under just conditions of life what high and honourable types of men and women may the Britain of the future know ?

4. *The Ideal of the After-Age.*—Here precision is impossible. The teaching of Ruskin, William Morris and Tolstoi and others has been germinal. Away over the horizon of the Socialist State there waits an order of life supremely and superbly noble, for which Socialism is itself making ready. To obey the impulse of pure love in all Humanity's doings will be grander than to do its duties because the law requires, "Thou shalt." Beyond the domain of a perfect Law lies the kingdom of a perfect Love.

"The World-soul greatens with the centuries."

IV. INTERNATIONALISM

The day will come when the summons of Marx, "Workers of all nations, unite !" will be regarded as the herald of a fresh era in human history. His "International" died ; the Internationalism he preached is deathless.

New organisations arose to perpetuate his ideal. International Socialist Congresses assemble periodically in the great cities of the world ; an International Socialist Bureau, with headquarters in Brussels, and representatives of all nations on its Committee, keeps the Socialist parties of the world in touch between Congresses ; Trade Unionists, and Trade Unionist secretaries, meet at intervals in International Conferences. We have also noted how the Brotherhood Movement, the characteristic expression of the religious life of the British workers, is developing international sympathies and enterprises. Humanity is essentially one, a sacred brotherhood ; that is the true democratic faith.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
 Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong ;
 Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
 Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame—
 In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

Democracy's ultimate gift to the world will be Peace. If German and Briton are brothers, why should they fight? Wars in the past have sprung from four causes—dynastic pride, religious passion, lust of territory, rivalry in trade. The decay of absolute monarchy and the growth of the spirit of toleration have, one may hope, eliminated the first two causes from modern menaces to peace. The third and fourth remain ; and to them must be added a fifth, huge armaments, since to be ready for war is to be predisposed to war. The surest ground for optimism is the growth of democratic power, together with the union of the democracies of all lands in a bond of mutual understanding, affection, and endeavour.

The peoples ask for peace (writes Sombart of Germany). The peoples have no antagonistic interests and no inimical feelings towards each other. There is, therefore, no reason for drawing swords. Every modern war is a senseless murdering of powerless millions who are led to the slaughter like so many sheep. The military systems are the soil where such criminal intentions take root and grow.¹

To the same effect is the resolution passed by the British Labour Party at its 1911 Conference :

This Conference, believing that Militarism and War are subversive of civilisation and national well-being, protests strongly against the heavy and growing burden of Armaments, which arrests social reform, and endangers international solidarity, goodwill, and peace. It further affirms that Militarism, whilst profitable to certain financial interests, to the activities of which not a little of our scaremongering can be traced, imposes a needless tax on the lives and the wages of the workers, and threatens to inflict on Great Britain the evils of compulsory military service.

¹ *Socialism and the Socialist Movement*, p. 195 ; pp. 178-211 contain an excellent discussion of Internationalism.

The Conference therefore declares that disputes between nations should be settled, not by brute force, but by reason and arbitration, and urges the workers of the country to take organised action with their fellows in Germany and other lands in counteracting the influence of scares, and in bringing about an understanding between all nations to secure international peace, and to advance social justice.

The capitalistic rivalries which to-day endanger the world's peace will pass as Capitalism recedes and Collectivism advances. When groups of capitalists can no longer amass huge fortunes through war, then occasions for war will significantly diminish. When Democracy directs diplomacy, Arbitration will dethrone Armaments. "The counsel of peace" will stand between the peoples.

CHAPTER IV

ARE DEMOCRATIC IDEALS CHRISTIAN ?

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Wherefore He anointed Me to preach good tidings to *the poor*.”

read Jesus from the Sacred Roll in the Synagogue at Nazareth. “To-day,” He went on to affirm, “hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.”¹ “Tell John,” said He months later—in answer to the imprisoned prophet’s message, “Art Thou He that cometh?”—“tell John the things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.” Jesus’ teaching ministry to the poor, and His healing ministry to the afflicted, were the self-chosen proofs of His Christhood. These were “the works of the Christ.”²

The modern Church has lost ground because an awakened Democracy deems her to have drifted far from the unflinching morality and loving comradeship with the common folk which characterised her Master. But of that more anon. Our present task is inspiring. We have tracked the path of the people’s progress, and now pause to ponder the inwardness of their struggles. Is there not in the aspirations of Labour an impressive likeness to the achievements of Him who was the Carpenter of Nazareth? The present

¹ Luke iv. 16-19 (R.V. margin).

² Matt. xi. 2-5.

ideals of British Democracy are three : to assure a *Minimum* Standard of Life to all ; to seek a *Maximum* Standard of Life for all ; to realise the essential oneness of Humanity. Are not these ideals Christian ? Is there not kinship between the aims of Democracy and " the works of the Christ " ?

I. THE FIRST IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY : IS IT CHRISTIAN ?

Democracy's first aim is to assure to all a *Minimum* Standard of Life in respect of wages, leisure, healthful environment, and education. Underpay, overtoil, needless suffering, and the arrest of mental development must cease.

Assuredly this is essentially Christian. To use the modern phrase, Jesus came to restore the Standard of Life, which had been degraded by disease, ignorance, and sin. " I came," He said, " that they may have *life*, and may have it abundantly." ¹ Therefore He denounced injustice, gave welcome to the weary, healed sickness, and taught with authority. Admitted that there was in Jesus' conception of life more than Democracy consciously seeks, it is equally true that every step toward the betterment of life is a step along the road which Jesus travelled.

Democracy asserts man's Right to Live. The assertion is both implicit and explicit in the teaching of Jesus. Take, for example, such a saying as this :

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father : but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows. ²

" The Right to Live " has here the moral sanction of God's loving foresight and purpose.

Proneness to overlook the obvious alone necessitates

¹ John x, 10.

² Matt. x. 29-31.

emphasis on the prayer which Jesus taught to men :
 "Give us this day our daily bread."¹ 'Επιούσιος,
 "daily," is "the most untranslatable word in the New
 Testament"; apart from the Lord's Prayer no other
 example of its use is known. Derivation justifies either
 of two literal translations :

Give us this day our bread *for the coming day.*²

Give us this day our *needful* bread.³

Both meanings are relevant. It is the Father's Will that none should lack life's necessities ; "bread for the coming day," "our needful bread," He means for all His children. The intent is that a minimum standard of life should be assured to all.⁴

It would be labouring the point to trace in detail the Bible teaching relating to the four points of the "Minimum" Charter—wages, leisure, healthful environment, and education. A few sentences will illustrate the Biblical emphasis on God's loving care for all, His demand for justice to the oppressed.

As to toil and its remuneration, Ruskin saw that the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard showed the mind of Jesus to be that "unto this last"—the man with the will to work but wanting the full opportunity—the means of life should be secured. James, perhaps the earliest of the New Testament writers, gathers into one flaming anathema the anger of the Bible against the exploiters of the poor :

Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. . . . Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out : and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.⁵

¹ Matt. vi. 11 ; Luke xi. 3. 'Επιούσιος in both Gospels.

² So Revised Version margin.

³ So American Version margin-alternative.

⁴ See also the discussion of the passage, Matt. vi. 19-34, on pp. 145-6.

⁵ James, v. 1, 4.

As to leisure, the presupposition of the Bible is that men will have time to think and worship. Over against the strained lives of the toilers of to-day set sayings such as these :

*I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait,
And in His word do I hope.*¹

It is good that a man should hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord.²

Recall, too, how the word "meditate" echoes throughout the 119th Psalm. How much of the present drift from public worship is due to reaction from the feverish rush of business, reaction which carries life past the sanctuary to the excitement of the crowd in street or park, or to the open freshness and joy of the countryside, as temperament and opportunity suggest.

As to healthful environment and education, the claims for these find abundant Biblical precedents in the Hebrew codes of law in the Old Testament, and the records of the ministry of Jesus as Healer and Teacher in the New.

Two objections are current against this association of Democracy's ideals with Biblical teaching. On the one hand, it is said that such a view of life is too material; on the other, that the claims of Labour are too revolutionary.

To the "too material" objector it should suffice to reply that the characteristic Christian view of life does not permit the branding of any of life's interests as "material," in the sense of being "non-spiritual." Life is one and indivisible, and God claims authority over its entire sphere.³ Nowhere are the "unearthly" aspects of religion more vividly portrayed than in

¹ Psalm cxxx. 5.

² Lam. iii. 26.

³ See, e.g. Luke x. 25-8; all the energies of life, affectional, spiritual, physical, and mental, have part in man's love of God.

Jesus' picture of the Final Judgment of Humanity by the Son of Man, and nowhere in the whole range of revelation are the common duties more clearly shown to be the decisive factor in shaping the destinies of eternity. The Christ is in the hungry and the thirsty, the stranger and the naked, the sick and the imprisoned; these are "My brethren, even these least"; man's attitude and action to them is his attitude and action to Him.¹

The oneness of life, physical and spiritual, is also evident in the interdependence of a low standard of physical well-being and a widespread alienation from Christian worship. The point will come up again; but ask now to how many millions in Britain is Christian experience wellnigh impossible? What about the slum-children? Can you fancy Jesus taking some anæmic, stunted, half-naked arab of the streets, who knew vice before virtue, whose "home" is a single, fœtid, dingy room, and saying smilingly, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"? No type of the nobler Humanity there! What, too, of the girl-mothers? The herding of old and young, chaste and unchaste, male and female, in "the warrens of the poor"; the pinch of poverty; the wrong which lust and gold can do—these are the abiding shame of modern Babylon. What of the homes of casual labourers? £1 this week, 15s. the next, nothing the third; what settled family life, what moral growth is likely, where the hold on the means of life is so slender?

The material interests of life are moral interests. To better the conditions is to give character a chance of betterment, especially with the children. It may well be that they who are refounding the life of the people on a surer economic basis have heard "the voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye *in the wilderness* the way of the Lord, make straight *in the desert* a highway for our God."

¹ Matt. xxv, 31-46.

The objection that Labour's claims are "too revolutionary," and therefore—so the inference runs—unchristian, is so superficial as scarcely to be worth serious discussion. The root question is not whether Labour's claims are revolutionary, but whether they are right. If they are right, they must be pursued at all cost and to their full issue; that is the true Christian ethic. No Christian should quibble over the epithet "revolutionary." Primitive Christianity was revolutionary, as we shall see. What is wrong with the twentieth-century type is that it has lost passion to overturn, and fire to destroy. Christ carried fealty to the extreme of death. The Cross is the testimony to the Right to Die for the truth's sake. Evolution is the *method* of Democracy; as long as social wrongs persist, social revolution must remain its *aim*.

II. THE SECOND IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY: IS IT CHRISTIAN?

Democracy's second aim is to seek for all a *Maximum Standard of Life*.

Here Socialism speaks. We have heard its message, and are now to ask whether the Socialist theory of life, the Socialist method, and the Socialist ideal, are Christian or unchristian? Does Socialism, as defined to-day by its accredited British representatives, accord or disaccord with the Christian view of life?

1. *The Socialist Theory of Life*.—The Socialist theory is that the life of Humanity is a unity, and should be administered as such.

It protests against the ruthless competition in present-day business, which pits man against man in a fierce rivalry for the means of life. Recognising the heroic struggle of honourable men to maintain uprightness in commercial relationships, it points out that scrupulous honesty is frequently a hindrance, not a help, where competition is keenest. The moral results

of the competitive struggle are disastrous. The losers go under. The winners are often losers too ; to gain gold they imperil the fine gold of character. The hostile spirit engendered towards one's rivals, "tricks of trade," adulteration of goods, pressure to "cut" wages or lengthen working-hours, the lack of leisure for enriching thought, make for the coarsening of habit and the obliteration of sensitiveness in respect of neighbourly duty. The constant appeal is to the meaner elements of human nature, to self-advantage, to the spirit of gain, to the low Jacob-cunning which plans and plots to outwit others. And from this fight for self-preservation comes a false standard of values. The wealthy rather than the worthy man is honoured and emulated. "Life is only dress'd for show." To make money quickly becomes the chiefest aim. For him who succeeds, though his wealth be won through others' indulgence in drink that destroys or their squalid life in rack-rented slums, through wholesale "sweating" of the poor or usurious money-lending, for him who succeeds *because he is rich*, glory and honour. Make him Mayor, Knight, Member of Parliament, Peer ; so runs our modern practice. It is hateful.

If it be replied that another system is coming into vogue—the "Combine" and the "Trust" are eliminating competition, and centralising industry in a few hands—the answer is that private ownership of the means of life on a grand scale is less to be trusted than on a small scale. Witness the methods by which some smaller firms are "eliminated" by their stronger or shrewder rivals ; let America tell of the "Trust" magnates' merciless grip of the public, of the colossal fortunes won at the expense of needy millions. The one good thing to be said of the "Trust" is that by its centralisation of industry it has made easier the ultimate transfer to public hands.

Socialism denounces the immoral madness, as well

as the waste and disorder of commercial competition. It proclaims a co-operative ideal, asserting that the sources of wealth should be publicly owned and worked for the common good. Yet since the competitive instinct is an integral element of human nature, it would still remain under the Socialist State, but for its due use, not abuse. Competition in ability would settle position and promotion in its Civil Services; but no one would compete for a "chance to live"; livelihood would be assured to all. Within the Work-State of the Future competition would find this higher expression. Just as the finest work of to-day is done not for money, but for honour, affection, or love of art or learning, so when time and scope avail to cultivate gift and ability, pride of craftsmanship will return; and men and women who care supremely for the quality of the thing wrought will compete in skill and intellect and artistic power, compete in service of the commonweal, compete, not as now, for work and wealth, but in the quality of the work and in the wealth of achievement.

Which is the more Christian ideal?

Certainly the Bible view is of life as a unity. In a paragraph whose every sentence pillories the present anti-social order (Eph. iv. 25-32), Paul sums up the Christian doctrine, "We are members one of another." Nor does Christ's teaching sanction the divisive, embittering relations of competitive commerce. His ideal is the Father-love of God, whose sun rises on the evil and the good, who sends rain on the just and the unjust: the competitive struggle breeds hate and subterfuge, Christ teaches open-hearted, perfect love of all.¹ The modern adulation of wealth is also plainly and flagrantly anti-Christian: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,"² cuts right athwart the ambition of the would-be rich; "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God,"³

¹ Matt. v. 43-8,

² Matt. vi. 19.

³ Mark x. 23.

like a lightning-flash displays the perils of money-making ; " What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life ? " ¹ boldly challenges a social order which haloes the millionaire. The nameless writer who counselled the Hebrew Christians, " Let your turn of mind be free from the love of money, " ² had the mind of Christ. To exalt the rich because they are rich is to court His condemnation who said, " A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. " ³

Instead of the present fight to live, Socialism asserts *for all* the right to live nobly, finely. Assuredly this is Christian. *All* is the keyword of the Gospel of Christ. For Him to see the multitudes hungry, untaught, was to feel compassion. He tasted death for every man. An economic doctrine which proclaims the uplifting of all has moral affinity with the Christian faith. Communal consciousness is characteristic of both Socialism and Christianity, rightly understood. Both respond to the prophetic protest, " Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? Why do we deal treacherously every man with his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers ? " ⁴

So, too, with the other Socialist article of faith, that the spirit of gain must be foresworn, and the spirit of service rule. ⁵ In the tireless round of " doing good " ; in the Sayings of the Sacrificial Life " I am in the midst of you as he that serveth, " ⁶ " The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many " ; ⁷ in the feet-washing, and the Cross, men have seen symbols of the noblest order of living. It is from the Man of Nazareth that Socialist teachers have gained their vision of life at its highest. Even Robert

¹ Matt. xvi. 26.

² Hebrews xiii. 5 (R. V. margin).

³ Luke xii. 15.

⁴ Malachi ii. 10.

⁵ See, e.g. the chapter, " The Spirit of Gain and the Spirit of Service, " in H. G. Wells's *New Worlds for Old*.

⁶ Luke xxii. 27.

⁷ Matt. xx. 26.

Blatchford, seldom quoted to this effect, says, "To none, in my peculiar mental make-up, am I more indebted than to Jesus Christ."¹

On the first count, the theory of life, the Christian finding is against competitive commercialism; the Socialist doctrines of the unity of life, the better way of life for all, and the exaltation of the spirit of service, harmonise with Christian revelation.

The competitive system cannot be reconciled with Christianity. It is a struggle for survival of those whose virtue is that they are the most adaptable; religion can never abandon the desire to supplant such a struggle by a method of selection which will secure the survival of graces and virtues. It must frequently result in glaring instances of the triumph of the unjust and of the otherwise unworthy; religion must always regard such results as indications that the conditions which produce them are alien to it. It is frankly a reign of wealth, whereas though religion may approve of the authority of a gilded aristocracy—divine right—or of a sober democracy—divine equality—it never can justify to itself a sovereignty of money, an empire of plutocracy. Above all, religion must resent the attempts made by commercialism to measure virtues by their economic advantages, and to appreciate, or depreciate, saints in accordance with whether they are or are not useful in counting-houses. However strenuously the economic needs of churches and chapels may strive to proclaim peace between these two essentially antagonistic systems of ethics, the peace thus patched up must always be unhappy and unnatural to both sides, and rebellion must frequently break out. As early Christianity had to challenge and change the life of Rome, so later Christianity must one day challenge and change the life of modern capitalist society.²

2. *The Socialist Method*.—"The watchword of Socialism is Evolution, not Revolution, and its battlefield is Parliament,"³ and, one should add, the Council Chamber.

¹ *Merrie England*, p. 77.

² J. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Socialist Movement*, pp. 81-2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

The ownership of the means of life is passing steadily from private to public hands ; the Municipalities and the State, by purchase or by the founding of new commercial undertakings, are coming into possession as owners, into control as employers.

Always provided that where a transfer is effected, even-handed justice is done to the sellers whose property the nation acquires, and to the nation so that the public purse pays as much but *no more* than is due, no question of the morality of the Socialist method arises for argument. The clamorous cry, "Socialism is robbery," is rapidly losing power to alarm. The State will not imitate the predatory methods by which powerful private individuals added house to house and field to field in the "good old days."

The State purchase of the business of the National Telephone Company, in 1911, is a case in point. The plant of the Company was taken over at a price to be fixed by arbitration ; the 18,000 employees became State servants at salaries in no instance lower, and in some instances higher, than those paid by the Company, with better "leave," "sickness," and pension conditions.

3. *The Socialist Ideal*.—From life as it is, sordid and avaricious, thought passes to life as it should be. Under the Socialist State, it has been shown that no sanctions for idleness will remain, economic poverty will disappear, and mental and moral enrichment be open to all ; thus the "highest possible standard of life for the individual" will cease to be a dream ; it will come within the compass of probability. Here beyond question Socialism and Christianity are in fundamental agreement.

(1) Both are idealistic.

That is "the practical man's" objection to Socialism ; but Christianity, on any interpretation, is essentially idealistic too. The Sermon on the Mount implies an age-to-be when the meek shall inherit the earth ;

chastity, truthfulness, non-resistance to personal affronts, and universal love be everyday virtues; hypocrisy vanish; the worship-life of prayer link man with God; the rule of Mammon end; treasures upon the earth cease to ravish, and treasures in heaven, of character and aspiration, allure; an age in which they who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness shall find "bread for the coming day" assured, and in which the Golden Rule shall be the common law. To deny that Jesus meant life to reach this level on earth is to empty His words of meaning; it is of the time-life He speaks throughout. To say that men cannot live thus in the fierce fight of the competitive struggle is to acknowledge that a nobler industrial method must be found, for the Will of Jesus demands obedience. To join the quest for the higher social order is to draw nearer and nearer to the Collectivist position.

(2) Both repudiate the idler.

It is not too much to say that the glorification of labour is the central point in all Socialist ethics, and that discussions on the organisation of labour, on the relation between labour and production, between labour and enjoyment, form the kernel of all Socialist theories. The world of the future will be a world of work. . . . On this all Socialists are agreed.¹

Nor does the Christian view of life tolerate idleness. "My Father *worketh* even until now, and I *work*," said Humanity's Archetype.² The Pauline dictum, "If any will not work, neither let him eat,"³ sets in sharp relief the attitude of the New Testament; the whole paragraph from which the saying is taken is relevant and should be studied.

(3) Both deny the necessity for *economic* poverty.

Socialism traces economic poverty, not to any lack in Nature's resources, but to an error in distribution of

¹ Sombart, *Socialism and the Socialist Movement*, p. 25.

² John v. 17.

³ 2 Thess. iii. 6-15.

the rewards of labour. "It is probably true that a group of about 120,000 people, who with their families form about one-seventieth part of the population, own about two-thirds of the entire accumulated wealth of the United Kingdom."¹ Socialism would rectify this gigantic error by placing the nation as a whole in possession of the sources of wealth, that none might suffer through grinding poverty or blinding riches.

The plea that Jesus held that poverty must endure because He said to His disciple-contemporaries, "The poor ye have always with you," is too foolish to debate seriously. Of grave importance, and seldom considered in its social bearing, is the pregnant passage on riches and poverty in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 19-34). After significantly charging His hearers not to "lay up . . . treasures upon the earth," and warning them, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," Jesus proceeds :

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment ? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they ? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature ? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek ; for your Heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness ; and all these things

¹ L. G. Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty* (tenth and revised edition), p. 79.

shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow : for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The meaning of the passage is simple and startling. Man should have no anxiety about life's necessities. A struggle to live is opposed to the Will of God. He is the All-Father, and does provide ; Nature's bounty is the proof. He clothes the flowers, and feeds all living things. Consider the lilies and the birds ; theirs is a life of splendour and of song. Much more should yours be so ; He plans for you no carking care, but joyous rest in Him. Away then with anxious thought ! You need food and raiment, but He knows that. Make your life-business, not foreboding and a fight for wealth, but the search for His Kingdom, the entering and the building-up of the community of men who do His Will, obeying His righteousness, *THEN all these things shall be added unto you.*

Nearly a third of the people of the United Kingdom live within or on the verge of the poverty line. Who dare say in face of the teaching of Jesus that this is as God wills, and as it must be ? It ought not to be, and need not be ; and both Christian and Socialist are committed to the quest of a Kingdom where human life shall wear the garb of gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away.

As to poverty rooted in moral misbehaviour, not economic wrong, poverty caused by drink, gambling, or prodigality—the attitude of Socialism is twofold. It reasons first that bad social conditions predispose to bad social actions ; the drinkshop's warmth and fellowship contrast enticingly with the narrow life of the noisy, crowded tenements of slumdom ; monotonous labour sets the hazard of betting in alluring light ; the menace of starvation goads to the shameful gaiety of the street. Therefore to improve the environment is to lessen the pressure of temptation, and for the

children it means a chance entirely to escape moral disaster. In this respect Socialism makes for morality.

Secondly, as to religion's remedy—spiritual conversion from evil life, the transformation of character by Christian faith and the energy of the Christ-spirit—Socialism as such, whatever the attitude of individual Socialists to personal religion, can only welcome a moral change which makes the man a better social unit, worthier as father, husband, neighbour, and citizen.

(4) Both claim that mental and moral enrichment should be possible to all.

The democratic demand for higher education and for leisure is pressed earnestly by Socialists. Year by year the nation suffers incalculable loss of genius and ability ; poverty submerges the promise of the people. In the Golden Age province after province should be added to human knowledge by the emancipated intellect.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies.

Morality, released from the fetters of the coarse, materialising stress of life, will intensify its hold on man, and develop social graces.

The harmony of this ideal with the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount is evident. Human energies, liberated from the struggle to live, would be free for dedication, as were the energies of Jesus, to the task of living holily. In the mighty Pauline phrase which sets the standard of richness of character, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," there might be disclosed a content of which to-day we scarcely can conceive. The Socialist Age of Duty enforced by Law should lead, under Christian influence, to the After-Age of Duty wrought by Love.

On the third count, the Socialist ideal, the finding

is well expressed in the following words of de Laveleye :

Every Christian who understands and earnestly accepts the teaching of his Master is at heart a Socialist, and every Socialist, whatever may be his hatred against all religion, bears within himself an unconscious Christianity.¹

III. THE THIRD IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY : IS IT CHRISTIAN ?

Internationalism is the third ideal of Democracy. It proclaims that Humanity is essentially one.

Here, again, the beliefs of Democracy and Christianity are in unison ; for the recognition of the oneness of the race is undeniably Christian. Even the Old Testament, with its intense nationalism, treasures the memory of the Divine word to Abraham, " In thee shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed." ² Jesus Himself overleaped all barriers of race. The Good Shepherd sought first " the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but He said expressly, " Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one shepherd." ³ Never was discernment clearer than that of the Samaritans who said of Him, " This is indeed the Saviour of *the world* ;" ⁴ by His brief residence among them Jesus deliberately showed His disapproval of the race-hatred that had parted Jew and Samaritan for centuries. The great Pentecost continued the true Christian tradition ; " upon all flesh " the Spirit came ; the tongues of witness told the good tidings to a cosmopolitan crowd. Jewish Nationalists, like Peter, had soon to learn " that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is ac-

¹ Cited in *New Encyclopædia of Social Reform*, vol. ii. p. 1131.

² Genesis xii. 3.

³ John x. 16 (R.V. margin).

⁴ John iv. 42.

ceptable to Him.”¹ Universalists, like Paul, exulted that the traditional race-enmity between Jew and Gentile could not survive the preaching of the Cross : “He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition,” gloried Paul, “having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . that He might create in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace.”² The Foreign Mission enterprises of the modern Church have rekindled this apprehension of the oneness of the race in the Divine Intention. Christ’s Kingdom knows no frontiers.

But what of the expression of this creed in the actual relationships of nations ? Democracy is practical. If the race is one, if Humanity is a brotherhood, then war, which sunders and slays, is fratricidal. Contemporary Democracy therefore denounces war ; insists that huge armaments menace peace and hinder social progress ; traces war-scares to the malevolent activities of the “interests” which war enriches ; and by its periodical International Congresses of Trade Unionists and Socialists fosters a spirit of world-unity among the workers.

Democracy is practical ; is Christianity ? Is there not peril lest Democrat outrun Christian ? The Society of Friends has consistently opposed war ; what other Christian communities have a similarly clean record ? In Christian literature, with some honourable exceptions, timidity and reserve mark the handling of the theme. The war-stories of the Old Testament are lingered on as though the Christ-Age had not dawned ; the imagery from soldier-life in the sayings of Jesus and Paul is treated as if in some subtle way it justified national blood-shedding ; while the great precept, “Love your enemies,” the benediction of the peace-makers, the growing thought of mankind as a brotherhood, the noble conception of the holy city where

¹ Acts x. 34-5.

² Ephesians ii., the whole passage ; verses 11-22, should be studied.

"death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more," these do not stimulate, as they should, a bateless protest against war. The ecclesiastical attitude to the South African conflict was equivocal; many applauded, few publicly dissented. An Archbishop blesses the launching of a "Dreadnought." Shot-shattered flags of bloody battles have pride of place in churches of the Prince of Peace. The Anglican Collect "for Peace" is really a Prayer for National Defence and Victory; no echo of the Angel-Song gives lilt or heavenward wing; *defend us* is a poor version of *on earth peace*. It was left to Tolstoi the heretic to teach non-resistance, the ideal of a coming age.

That the democratic uprising against war has New Testament sanctions is undeniable; the ideal of World-Peace should be common to Democracy and Christianity; the sorrow is that its proclamation is often more urgent on the platforms of Labour than from the pulpits of the Churches.

IV. DEMOCRACY AND THE CHURCH

The three ideals of Democracy—a Minimum Standard of Life, a Maximum Standard of Life, Internationalism—are Christian ideals also. Granted that the full Christian ideal transcends these, comprehending character and circumstance, the eternal and the temporal, it still stands true that as touching the life of To-day the aims of Democracy do not diverge from the track of Christian thought.

Strange, then, is the undoubted severance between Democracy and the Church. Misunderstanding or mispractice, or both, on a colossal scale, must have come in to part those who, at least, should not have found a friendly understanding difficult.

If it be replied that while ideals harmonise, methods do not, and that industrial history shows the workers

at times resorting to threats and violence, the latter contention must in fairness be allowed : but as to the former, Church history displays the lamentable fact that sons of the Church—Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans alike—have been guilty of the same error on a larger scale, as witness the Holy Inquisition, the Act of Uniformity and the Conventicle Act, the storming of Drogheda. In this matter mutual charity is wisest.

Why, then, the severance ? On the part of the Church there has been, and is, not only misconception of democratic aims and movements, but a yet graver misconception of her own responsibility and function. It is quite certain, for instance, that the foregoing statement, "the ideals of Democracy are Christian ideals also," will be repudiated by some Christians, by others regarded as a specious attempt to introduce party politics into the Church, by others again declared to be a dangerous doctrine likely to lead the Church away from her proper business of "preaching the gospel."

These and similar misconceptions of the Christian Message and the Christian Duty have, as later pages will show, given a bias to Church life that has carried it far from the life of Democracy. Whom God would have joined man has put asunder. But no *ipse dixit* will avail here. The present issue is too grave to be dismissed with any statement of personal opinions, still less of prejudices. The appeal must be to the primitive Christian documents, to the primitive Christian experience. The crucial question being, What is the Church's rightful business, the answer involves a re-study of the origins of the Church, and of the scope of the original Christian gospel.

If, as a result, it should be seen that the pioneers of Christianity conceived of their Evangel in terms of breadth and intensity unfamiliar to us, terms which bring within the scope of the Evangel the ideals

dear to modern Democracy, then the Church of to-day, *at the cost of a return to Scriptural principle and precedent*, will find, as in the ancient days, when Christ is so preached the common people will hear Him gladly.

SECTION III

PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN CHURCH

Christianity has lost ground only when Christians have put their trust in institutions, wealth, or prestige, and have lost touch with suffering Humanity. . . . So long as the Early Church kept to the spirit of the Gospel, it formed a genuine democracy.—J. HOLLAND ROSE.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S BUSINESS ?

I. THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

SOCIAL consciousness is reborn. Modern experience encircles interests and activities undreamt of by our fathers. Amongst the leaders of thought a spiritual interpretation of life is replacing the agnosticism and materialism of yesterday. Such are the notes of the New Age.

Now what of the Church ?

It would be idle to ignore the challenge which changing circumstances present to her, and to pass blindly by the apparent reverse in her fortunes. We must face the demand of our day, coming from without as well as within the Church, that she define her mission. Has she something to contribute to modern life ? Or would Humanity be none the poorer if—to use Canon Peile's phrase—the Church shrank into a pietistic sect, out of touch with life in its stress and fullness ?

Beyond her frontiers men are asking these questions, men not hostile to goodness, who freely spend time, thought, and toil in the services of public life and in private ministries of benevolence. It is significant that in the contemporary labour and social service movements one continually meets untiring workers who once adhered to the Church, but now seldom or never are seen in her congregations.

Within the Churches also there is keen debate. Take

a typical case : a spacious church in a busy provincial city, a church years ago crowded with worshippers, chiefly of the middle-class. Slowly the neighbourhood altered its characteristics. The well-to-do moved to new suburbs ; houses in which they had dwelt were let in tenements to poorer folk. The congregation steadily declined. To-day a few of the families of the better days remain, from whom the officers of the Church are usually recruited ; but of the thousands of the very poor who live around, only the meagrest fraction regard the Church in their midst as an interest vital to their lives. Their years are spent in a grim struggle against want ; sweated home-workers, casual labourers, a sprinkling of skilled artisans : these are the dwellers in the grey streets that have lost their glory, whose only outward brightness is the glamorous radiance of the public-house. In such circumstances, what is that Church's business ? Doles of charity or deeds of justice ? Is she, or is she not, required of God to protest against the inhumanities around her ? Is she, or is she not, to form and lead public conviction against the anti-social horrors of the garret-life of sweated women, the prostitution born of poverty and lust, the shattering of family-life through destitution ? Does it suffice to proclaim the pardon of God to almost empty pews ? or, since "*all* unrighteousness is sin,"¹ must not the preacher wrestle with unrighteous causes as well as consequences ?

The most diverse answers are given. To some these social questions are exclusively the concern or unconcern of the private citizen ; the Church, at any rate, should leave them alone. To others life is one and indivisible ; sin and redemption are, therefore, both individual and communal, and the Church's responsibility alike for men and for mankind ; in the judgment of such men the mission of the Church directly concerns both slum-dweller and slum. The difference

¹ 1 John v. 17.

is vital; for here interpretations of Christianity conflict. The first problem of the modern Church confronts us: *What is the Church's business?*

There is a Court of Appeal to which both disputants should be willing to submit the issue—the records of primitive Christianity. The guidance of the New Testament is authoritative. The Spirit of Truth who inspired its writers and the Christian teachers of later generations, inspires pure-hearted men to-day; but His revelation, whilst progressive, is one in itself and not contradictory; it is precept upon precept, never precept against precept. Therefore the principles which should direct the Church in these intricate, perplexing days are discoverable there. The Church's rightful mission is defined by the Will of Christ revealed therein. Before that Will preconception and prejudice must bow; to the full limits of that Will the Church is in duty bound to travel.

II. THE ANSWER ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

What, then, according to the New Testament, is the business of the Church of Christ? Choosing the book of "The Acts of the Apostles" as a purposeful chronicle of the origin and growth of the Church, and closely scanning its narrative, we discover the answer it supplies to be as simple as its implications are startling. As this primitive Christian document declares it, the business of the Church is to *witness* for Jesus the Christ.

"Ye shall be My *witnesses*," said Jesus to His followers on the day of His ascension.¹ That was their sole responsibility, a responsibility which each according to his several ability must discharge. It was to this end that "power" was promised, "when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Beginning with their native land, Judea, their line of witness was to go out "unto the uttermost part of the earth."

¹ Acts i. 8; compare Matt. xxviii. 19-20.

Throughout the record this note resounds. To fill Judas's place Matthias was chosen from Jesus' disciple-company to be "a *witness* with us of His resurrection."¹ Apostolic lips reiterate the very word of Jesus. "We all are witnesses," say Peter and his companions, harking back to the significant term again and again.² As we shall see, each "Act" of the Apostles was a Witness-bearing; whether an interpretation of national history in the light of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, a healing of the sick like the lame man at the Beautiful door of the Temple, or the ceaseless proclamation of Jesus risen and redeeming.

So far, at any rate, all is clear. To "witness" for Jesus the Christ: that is the Church's business. The question now to be considered in fuller detail is, What is the content of the Witness the Church is to bear of her Lord?

None will deny that first of all the primitive Witness was of *Jesus risen*. "With great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."³ Peter's sermons are bestrewn with assertions that God raised up Jesus.⁴ "I see . . . the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," was Stephen's death-cry.⁵ Paul repeatedly recited his conversion-story; how he saw "the Righteous One," as he, the persecutor, journeyed to Damascus.⁶ It was his insistence on Jesus' resurrection that won for him the derision of Athens.⁷ The first content of the Witness was, "Jesus lives!"

The second content of the Witness was this: *Because Jesus lives, His mission lives*. The substance of apostolic testimony might be summarised thus: All that Jesus stood for survives the Cross; His ministry and message for mankind are deathless; "we are witnesses

¹ Acts i. 21-2.

² Acts ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 33, v. 30-2, x. 39.

³ Acts ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 10, v. 31, x. 40.

⁴ Acts xxii. 6-16, xxvi. 12-18.

⁵ Acts iv. 33.

⁶ Acts vii. 56.

⁷ Acts xvii. 18-32.

of all things which He did," therefore we must re-establish His ministry and reaffirm His message, for in the days of His flesh He said, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also."¹

It is possible to distinguish the threads of thought in this apostolic Witness to the Living Mission of the Living Christ. Woven as they are into one fabric of speech and deed, the dominant apostolic ideas of what Jesus' Mission essentially was are none the less discernible. They are three. Jesus interpreted life; Jesus healed the sick and the demon-possessed; Jesus forgave sin. Accordingly the apostles proclaimed Jesus as Prophet, Healer, and Saviour. Their business, as they conceived and discharged it, was to continue in the Name of Jesus this threefold ministry of prophecy, healing, and salvation. The work was one. They were not less spiritual when interpreting national history than when urging individual repentance; not less witness-bearers for Jesus in healing paralysis or fever than in preaching to the women of Philippi or to the philosophers of Athens.

So vital to our argument is this view of the apostolic Witness to Jesus that it claims closer study. We must look in turn at the Prophetic Witness of these pioneers of Christianity, their Healing Witness, and their Witness to Salvation through Jesus.

III. THE PROPHETIC WITNESS OF THE PIONEERS OF CHRISTIANITY

The pioneers made no mistake when they proclaimed Jesus as the Prophet, the supremest Interpreter of Life.² With such authority did He teach, with such authority did He act, that "the Prophet" became His

¹ John xiv. 12.

² The first three Evangelists expressly set on record the impression of authority Jesus made on His hearers: Matt. vii. 28-9; Mark xi. 18; Luke iv. 32.

standing designation among the populace.¹ "Never man so spake!" said the officers in excuse of their failure to arrest Him.² "By what authority doest Thou these things?" demanded the ecclesiastics after His forcible cleansing of the Temple,³ unconsciously paying tribute to His unwavering dominance. His intimate fellowship with the poor and the outcasts, His ceaseless emphasis on the perils of wealth, His bold denunciations of the hypocrisies of the existing social order,⁴ His portrayal of the ideal life for men and mankind, in which the pure in heart are happy in the vision of God and the meek inherit the earth, profoundly impressed His disciples, as we can trace in their "Acts" and letters. When, therefore, before His Ascension He reaffirmed His claim in the tremendous utterance, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth," and proceeded to lay upon them the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, . . . *teaching them* to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you,"⁵ they justly felt themselves charged to continue His Prophetic Ministry, as interpreters of life in His Name.

Their Prophetic Witness is distinguishable in two spheres—in their utterances and writings which survive to us, and in the type of life which grew up in response to their teaching.

As to their speeches—sermons as we should call most of them nowadays—those that remain to us relevant to our subject include three by Peter—that on the day of the great Pentecost, that in Solomon's porch of the Temple after the healing of the lame beggar, and that before the Judean Church justifying his fellowship with Gentiles—one by Stephen before the Sanhedrim, and one by Paul in the synagogue in

¹ Matt. xxi. 11 ; Luke vii. 16, xxiv. 19 ; John vi. 14, vii. 40.

² John vii. 45-7.

³ Mark xi. 27-8.

⁴ E.g. the twenty-third chapter of Matthew.

⁵ Matt. xxviii. 19-20.

Pisidian Antioch ;¹ while their line of teaching is expanded in the Epistles to Churches, which occupy the later pages of the New Testament.

Regard one speech as a type of all—that by Stephen. Taking its rise, like the rest, out of an immediate circumstance, in this case his arrest as an agitator, the speech passes in review the outstanding figures and events of his nation's history—Abraham's migrations, Joseph's career in Egypt, the horrors of Egyptian serfdom, Moses the apostle of national freedom, the idolatry of the calf of gold, the conquest under Joshua, the building of the Temple, and the falsity of the idea that God could be localised within its walls. Then comes the prophetic outburst. Ecclesiasticism had always misconstrued God, and resisted His messengers. "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? They killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye have become betrayers and murderers."² It is an appeal to the witness of history, an unqualified assertion of the supremacy of righteousness in every age. With fearless intensity it leaps upon the sham, smug piety which under pretence of zeal for the sanctuary ignored the primal duties of justice and love. Little wonder the priests stoned Stephen. He, like his Lord, was a prophet.

The nature of this Prophetic Witness is also reflected in *the type of life* which grew up in response to the prophetic teaching of the pioneers.

It would be a mistake to class it under any of the theories of modern economics, Anarchism, Socialism, or even Communism ; for while the latter term would not be inappropriate, it, like the rest, has acquired associations of ideas and customs which were not characteristic of the communal life of the primitive

¹ By Peter, Acts ii. 14-36, iii. 12-26, xi. 4-17 ; by Stephen, vii. 2-53 ; by Paul, xiii. 16-41.

² Acts vii. 2-53.

Christians. One cannot rightly transplant twentieth-century terms into first-century life.

What is certain from the Lukan record is that those who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching" instinctively adopted a method of life in striking contrast to the life around them. They were actually known as the people of *The Way*, unusual, extraordinary people, with a way of life of their own. Six times in the "Acts" does this description, "The Way," occur.² Twice the mode of life of the Jerusalem Christians is explained in some detail:

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people (Acts ii. 44-7).

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need (Acts iv. 32-5).

All this was unforced, spontaneous. Joseph, better known as Barnabas, sold a field, and placed the proceeds at the disposal of the apostles. Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, but under the pretence of giving all, held back a part: their fearful death was the penalty of deceit, not of failure to pay in all to the poor fund.³

Yet while it is true that "they had all things com-

¹ Acts ii. 42.

² Acts ix. 2, xix. 9 and 23, xxii. 4, xxiv. 14 and 22 R.V. The translators of the A.V. missed the significance of the words, ἡ ὁδὸς.

³ Acts iv. 36-v. 11.

mon," not because law compelled but rather that love constrained, and that the exact form of their response to love does not bind Christians to-day, some other things are also true and are binding.

For example, these primitive Christians foreswore money-making as life's chief end. Possessions to them were to supply want, not to satisfy life, so they held them with a loose hand, and "parted to all, according as any man had need." They lived, not for themselves, but for one another, because they lived for God. What would they say of the modern Christian millionaire, and of all religionists whose standard of values in life is financial!

Then they had an ideal of what human society ought to be. Their life was not solitary but social. Since their Witness was to be borne unto the uttermost part of the earth until—as John heard great voices in heaven say—"The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ,"¹ their life must be a pattern of the world-life when that should have become the Kingdom of God. They were, as we should say, to anticipate the progress of Humanity. The lust and greed and hate in life without, were to be contradicted by the purity, unselfishness, and mutual love of the life within. If the world was to win home to God, the Church must set the pace. Therefore they socialised their possessions that no brother might be in need, nor any soul enslaved by wealth. Again we may ask, what would these primitive Christians think of the modern Church when she regards the preacher of social regeneration as a visionary to be unheeded, or a revolutionary to be silenced?

This type of life, the life of an organised brotherhood, was the direct outcome of the Prophetic Witness. Believers who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching" thus lived. At first the apostles themselves received the proceeds of sales of property, and appar-

¹ Rev. xi. 15,

ently superintended distribution to the needy ;¹ when "seven men of good report" were appointed for "this business," that was done at the direct suggestion of the Twelve, who solemnly set the Seven apart for the duty.² Thus we can safely reason back from the communal life of the Jerusalem Church to the teaching which gave it shape and impetus. The Christian community lived as the Prophetic Witness of the apostles suggested.

This Prophetic Witness, it has now been shown, continued the prophetic phase of Jesus' ministry. From the records of the sermons and writings of the pioneers of Christianity, and from the Church-life which grew up under their guidance, it is seen that their Prophetic Witness concerned :

(1) A religious interpretation of national history.

(2) An unsparing condemnation of contemporary evil, and

(3) The building up of the Church as a Christian Brotherhood, whose unselfish life imaged the world-life to be, when all the nations should be gathered in one Christian discipleship.

IV. THE HEALING WITNESS OF THE PIONEERS OF CHRISTIANITY

There is no room for doubt that the Healing Witness of the pioneers of Christianity was a true continuation of the second phase of Jesus' ministry—His healing activity. The extremest criticism of the text of the Gospels leaves works of healing in the outline of the life of Jesus which it attests ; while the position of most modern Biblical scholars sustains the substantial accuracy of the Evangelists' portrayal of that loving ministry to the sick on which the mind of Humanity has ever fondly lingered.³ Twenty-five specific in-

¹ Acts iv. 35 and 37, v. 2.

² Acts vi. 1-6.

³ Cf. e.g. article on "Miracles," by T. H. Wright, in *Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

stances of healing by Jesus are mentioned, with more or less fullness of detail, by one or other of the four Evangelists. But statistics fail here. Beyond the specified cases were numberless occasions when the sick were brought to Him, and as the Gospels say with graphic simplicity, "He healed them." Take two examples :

And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. And when they were come out of the boat, straightway the people knew Him, and ran about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard He was. And wheresoever He entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment : and as many as touched Him were made whole (Mark vi. 53-6).

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of Him went forth into all Syria : and they brought unto Him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied, and He healed them (Matt. iv. 23-4).

Nor did Jesus regard His healings as a subsidiary part of His ministry. God is love, and these tokens of love were credentials that He was the Son of God, credentials more authoritative than even the testimony of His herald, John the Baptist. "The witness that I have is greater than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me."¹

Neither is there room for doubt that Jesus required and equipped His followers to continue this healing ministry. Care for the bodies of our neighbours is

¹ John v. 36 ; see also ix. 4 in relation to the paragraph ix. 1-12 ; also x. 25.

expressly, emphatically taught in the tale of the Good Samaritan, whose succour to the wounded traveller is Jesus' chosen illustration of what neighbourly love involves.

It was in harmony with this teaching that Jesus sent His followers on errands of healing similar to His own. To the Twelve He gave "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and sickness."¹ Later, seventy (or seventy-two) others were sent two by two, charged when they entered a city to "heal the sick that are therein"; and with great rejoicing they came back reporting, "Even the demons are subject to us in Thy Name."²

Passing from the Gospels to the "Acts," this Witness of works is seen to be interwoven with the Witness of words. One does not like the terms "natural" and "supernatural"—they offend against the truth of the indivisibility of life; but if they may be used as meaning "usual" and "unusual," we may trace the Healing Witness to Jesus in both forms.

The "natural," usual, form of the Healing Witness of the pioneers is seen in the sale of possessions by rich Christians that their poorer brethren might be succoured; in the appointment of the Seven that "the daily ministration" to widows and others in need should be efficiently organised; in the relief sent by the Christians of Antioch "unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea" in a famine year;³ and in Paul's appeal to his own example during three years' residence in Ephesus, "These hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. . . . So labouring ye ought to help the weak."⁴ This is response to a recognised principle and obligation of social responsibility.

¹ Matt. x. 1; see also verse 8.

² Luke x. 1, 8-9, 17; note footnote to verse 1 as to the number of disciples sent.

³ Acts xi. 27-30, xii. 25.

⁴ Acts xx. 34-5.

The "supernatural," or unusual, form of the Healing Witness is seen in cures of diseased minds and bodies. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Peter bade a lame man at the Beautiful door of the Temple, "walk."¹ Philip at Samaria healed people afflicted with unclean spirits, paralysis, and lameness.² Peter at Lydda "found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed for eight years, for he was palsied." "Æneas," said the apostle, "Jesus Christ healeth thee! Arise, and make thy bed! And straightway he arose."³

At Joppa, Tabitha was raised from death by Peter.⁴ At Ephesus "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul";⁵ at Lystra he healed a man crippled from birth.⁶

An intensely interesting group of questions relating to Christian Faith-Healing—whether, for example, this power to heal was destined to continue in the Church, and whether there are evidences of its continuance—would embark us on discussions beyond the bounds of our present inquiry.⁷ Our present task is limited to the discovery of the lines along which the Healing Witness of primitive Christianity travelled. What, therefore, directly concerns us is that manifold evidences show that side by side with the Prophetic Witness of the pioneers ran their Healing Witness. With burning words they stirred the conscience of their age; with loving deeds they lifted human burdens of poverty and sickness. These ministries of social ser-

¹ Acts iii. 1-10.

² Acts viii. 6-8, 13.

³ Acts ix. 32-5.

⁴ Acts ix. 36-41.

⁵ Acts xix. 11-2.

⁶ Acts xiv. 8-10.

⁷ The following sentences from the article "Miracles," by T. H. Wright, in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, express a view of Christian Faith-Healing to which many will assent: "In all generations of the Christian era, certain natures, specially God-sensitive, conspicuously consecrated to God and sympathetic with man and all living things, appear to have wielded a real though imperfect control over the physical processes of life. Both through them and in them remarkable forces have been at work which we cannot but believe are God-sustained and God-energised, producing super-normal phenomena. . . . Forces that make for healing un-

vice, as we should now name them, were a Witness borne to Jesus, Himself the Great Healer. Whether aiding the poor, or curing disease—and so removing a prolific cause of poverty—they could recall numerous precedents for both in Jesus' public life. They had learned from Him that Humanity's sorrows were His Church's business as well as Humanity's sins. "Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue," wrote the disciple whom Jesus loved, "but in deed and in truth."¹

V. THE WITNESS TO SALVATION THROUGH JESUS BY THE PIONEERS OF CHRISTIANITY

Over ground uncumbered by controversy we can pass quickly. The modern ecclesiastical attitude is in truth a curious reversal of the ancient attitude of ecclesiastics to Jesus. To-day the right of the Church to witness to Forgiveness through Jesus is accepted as beyond question; the Prophetic Witness and the Healing Witness are the centres of contemporary debate. Yet in the days of His flesh Jesus' right to teach and to heal was seldom challenged,² but His assertion that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" was regarded as blasphemy, and aroused bitterest opposition.³ In that assertion, and in the exercise of authority to forgive, Jesus persisted; as indeed we

doubtedly lie in human nature . . . and in times of great spiritual awakening, when the sense of the reality of the Unseen and Divine is quickened, and God's presence is freshly and acutely realised, startling manifestations of these sub-conscious or super-conscious forces may occur, and need not surprise any who understand how closely the Divine power has access to all forces of human life."

An interesting discussion of "Faith Cure" and "Christian Science" will be found in Cutten's *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*; and of Healing as an essential Christian function in *Christus Futurus*.

¹ 1 John iii. 18.

² Note the admission of Nicodemus the Pharisee, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that Thou doest except God be with him" (John iii. 2).

³ Mark ii. 1-12.

must persist to-day in protest against the maiming of the Church's lawful Witness to Him by the partial or complete denial of her right to prophetic and healing ministries.

The Gospels are radiant with gems of forgiving love. Jesus' forgiveness of the sins of the Capernaum paralytic, and of the sinful woman whom Simon the Pharisee despised ;¹ His great and tender sayings,² "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost," "Ye shall find rest unto your souls"; the undying pathos of His story of the prodigal son whom the father loved back to home, and His own forgiving words on the Cross to the malefactor who suffered with Him, and for the rabble who jeered His agony³: these are well-remembered instances of a campaign of redemption which the primitive Christian community was expressly charged to continue.

"As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you," said the Risen Lord to the disciples. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven to them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."⁴ We may not digress from our path of inquiry to examine the theological controversies which focus in this saying. Our present point is beyond controversy. To His Church Jesus gave authority to declare Divine forgiveness for human sin.

With Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost the Witness by the pioneers to Salvation through Jesus began. The three thousand "added unto them that day" were the firstfruits of a world-harvest. Before the last of the apostles died, Western Asia, Southern

¹ Luke vii. 36-50.

² Matt. ix. 13; Luke xix. 10; Matt. xi. 29.

³ Luke xv. 11-32, xxiii. 39-43, xxiii. 44.

⁴ John xx. 19-23. That the commission to forgive was delivered to "a general gathering of the believers in Jerusalem," and not to the ten apostles only (Judas was dead, Thomas absent), see Westcott's notes on the passage (*Gospel of St. John*).

Europe, and parts of Northern Africa had heard the good tidings of great joy.

One aspect of the Witness to Forgiveness requires emphasis. Only forgiving men can be forgiven, taught Jesus. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."¹ On this basis, are there not unforgiven people within the Church, unforgiven because unforgiving? How much of the relative impotence of the modern Church is due to forgetfulness that corporate power in proclaiming forgiveness depends on individual willingness to forgive? Where feuds flourish and personal enmities are rife, where the spirit of caste overbears the spirit of comradeship, and where intolerance is the prevalent attitude toward those whose views of Churchly duty differ from the majority, what wonder that there progress is arrested! An unforgiving Church must lose the power to redeem.

VI. WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S BUSINESS?

The answer to the question, What is the Church's business? has been sought and found. The business of the Church of Christ is to bear a threefold Witness to her Lord, as Prophet, Healer, and Saviour. In His name, and by His grace, she is to perpetuate His ministries of prophecy, healing, and salvation.

Against the personal and public evils of the age she is to bear a Prophetic Witness to the sovereign rights of Christ as Moral Ruler of mankind. This Prophetic Witness is to find practical expression in the rectifying of all human relationships, and the building up of a Christian Society from which love of money has departed, and in which brotherly love reigns.

The mental and physical sufferings of men are to call forth her Healing Witness. Whatever view be

¹ Matt. vi. 12-5; note also Matt. xviii. 21-35; Luke xvii. 3-4.

taken of the permanence or impermanence of "gifts of healings" in the Church, every apostolic miracle on diseased mind or body is a proof that to banish sickness is as integral a duty of the Church as to banish sin ; just as the sale of Barnabas' field to augment the poor fund, or the choice of the Seven to oversee the daily ministration to widows in need, proves that to banish poverty is also a true function of the Church. In such acts, and in the principles of social responsibility which they imply, our modern Christian social service finds its Scriptural precedents and justification.

The Church's crowning Witness is to Salvation through Jesus. Against the slum in the heart she is to protest as against the slum in the city. Claiming a new and nobler environment, she is to disclose the secret of a new and holier character. Sin is her foe ; forgiveness of the sinful, and conquest of sin through Christ, her inspiring Evangel. Each impulse of the beast-nature in man Christ can subdue. Each yearning for angel-purity He can satisfy. To the lofty standard of His stainless example, to "full-grown manhood, to the ripe maturity of the fulness of Christ," the Church is to call back Humanity.

VII. THE PIONEERS AS EXTREMISTS

Extremists now, as ever, are unpopular. Men of one idea, men ill-content with less than all they seek, men impatient with progress a step at a time, eager to win home as by an aeroplane's flight, are under the ban of popular censure. The peril of our age is that its chilly breath should slay the seer, whose visions, after all, kindle the energies of the race, as the call of the sun wakes the frost-bound earth.

Hence it is refreshing to read, nowadays, of the exploits of these pioneers of Christianity. They were extremists. They bore their threefold Witness in the

face of a hostile, angry world. They mitigated no element of their message. To the wiles of the devil they opposed the whole armour of God. They recanted nothing; they died instead. *Mártus* (*martus*), the primitive word for "Witness," assumed another and bloodier meaning before New Testament days had passed;¹ the *martus* became the *martyr*, the man who sealed his Witness with his blood.

Mark the fling of the Prophetic Witness of the pioneers, and it will be readily understood how the witness-bearing led to martyrdom.

"We straitly charged you not to teach in this name," say the ecclesiastics to the apostles whom for a second time they have arrested; "and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." "We must obey God rather than men," answered they; and when after scourging, and a fresh command to keep silence, they are set at liberty, "every day in the temple, and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ."² Against such righteous anarchy unlawful law was powerless. The pages of the "Acts" are splashed with blood, but the Faith strides triumphantly on. Thrice Peter and his companions are in prison, once he is in peril of imminent death; Stephen and James are slain; Paul, erstwhile persecutor, afterward apostle, is stoned at Lystra and left for dead, imprisoned at Philippi, the centre of a riot at Ephesus, mobbed, beaten, and committed to Roman custody at Jerusalem. The place of origin of a considerable section of the New Testament literature is significant: a group of Paul's Epistles was written in prison, the "Revelation of John" in exile "in the isle that is called Patmos." The pioneers were spiritual revolutionaries. The mob that assaulted the house of Jason in Thessalonica spoke the truth; the men "come hither" are those

¹ Rev. xvii. 6; see also ii. 13.

² Acts v. 28-29 and 40-42.

“that have turned the world upside down!”¹ Certainly men who dethroned the love of money, and exalted the love of God and man;² whose teaching imperilled trading interests;³ who refused to be silenced by authority: such men were dangerous to a society which loved wealth, oppressed man, and ignored God. Contemporary Christians ought to be dangerous to a similar social order to-day.

The same mark of extremism is seen in their Healing Witness. Amongst those they healed were persons regarded as “hopeless cases”—men lame from birth, Æneas eight years bedridden, Tabitha raised even from the dead. So with their healing of the social order. It was drastic. Their little company, the body of Jerusalem believers, set the standard for future ages. A communal spirit, born of love, taught them to regard material possessions as social rather than personal; and so that little Christian community at Jerusalem, within whose circle “they had all things common,” anticipated the trend of thought twenty centuries later. The Rebirth of Social Consciousness, a note of this New Age, but re-echoes with increasing resonance the dominate note of the life of the pioneer Christians of Palestine—the note of brotherly love.

The Witness to Salvation also took no heed of “hopelessness.” There was hope for every man. “He is able to save to the uttermost,”⁴ was their testimony to Jesus. Lydia the gentle-spirited, a slave-girl of brutalised life, and the burly, uninstructed Roman goaler of the city—these were Paul’s first trophies in Philippi,⁵ a sufficiently diversified group to illustrate the saving power of Christ over all temperaments and circumstances. Paul’s catalogue, in his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, of the evildoers who shall not inherit the Kingdom of God—fornicators, idolaters,

¹ Acts xvii. 6.

³ Acts xix. 23–41.

⁵ Acts xvi. 11–40.

² Acts ii. 44–45 and iv. 32–35.

⁴ Hebrews vii. 25.

adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners—is followed by the startling words, “And such were some of you.”¹ Nothing but the refusal of hearers to believe in Jesus as the Christ stayed the pioneers’ Witness to His redemptive power.²

Has the note of world-defiance died down in modern Christianity? Does the Church ceaselessly challenge the entrenchments of evil? Does she rally to the voice of the prophet, or seek to stifle it, lest the stir of strife be wakened? “Silver and gold have I none,” said Peter to the cripple whom he bade, in the name of Jesus, “walk!” Has the Church lost power to heal the plagues of modern life because she herself limps on crutches of gold? And power to convert, faith in spiritual conversion, what of that? Is the normal preaching of the Church a proclamation of a decisive, abiding salvation by Jesus?

In a sentence, Is the contemporary Church extremist or opportunist? In these tremendous matters, better make mistakes in going too far—if that be possible—than the fatal mistake of not going far enough.

¹ 1 Cor vi. 9-11.

² Acts xviii. 5-7.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DEMOCRACY

FAITHFULNESS in bearing a Prophetic Witness against all evil; a Healing Witness expressed in brotherly ministries to the sick and the poor, and in the social service which tracks out the causes of suffering and poverty, and directs thought and action to their removal; a Witness to Salvation through Jesus, proclaiming hope for every man—fidelity in this threefold mission cannot but bring the Church into close touch with Democracy. It was so at the first, as the previous chapter has shown; and yet to-day Church and Democracy are adrift on a sea of misunderstanding. Why?

We confront the second problem of the Church of to-day: What is the cause of the hostility of modern Democracy to the Church? What should be the Church's attitude toward contemporary Democracy? The answer is best given on historical lines.

I. THE CHURCH AND THE MULTITUDE AT THE FIRST

Let it be observed that the contention is not that Christianity at the first was a class religion setting poor against rich. It is not a religion for a class but for the community—for all, and not alone for some. The argument is that Christianity did at the first find the way of approach to "the multitude" easy; that its outlook on life made strong appeal to them; that

it met their needs ; and that it evoked, more from the working-folk than from any other class, an eager response.

1. *Primitive Christianity found the Way of Approach to the Multitude Easy.*—Most of its preachers were, like Jesus, men of the multitude. Jesus was born in an artisan's family ; Joseph and Mary made the offering of the poor when they presented the Infant in the Temple.¹ Jesus was brought up in an artisan's home and He Himself worked as a carpenter.² In His itinerant life as a Teacher he mixed freely with social outcasts, "publicans and sinners,"³ and loved to be with the crowd⁴ whom the Pharisees despised.⁵ His teaching is full of images from the common life which He and His hearers knew so well—the lamp on the stand and the leaven hid in meal, the work of ploughmen and sowers and harvesters, of fishermen and carpenters and the hired labourers in the vineyard. Of the twelve whom He chose to continue His mission four were Galilean fishermen,⁶ perhaps seven ;⁷ and Matthew belonged to the detested order of *publicani*, the tax-gatherers.⁸ The "Acts" and the Epistles show how constant was the association of the pioneers of Christianity with the common folk. Even Paul, probably of wealthy descent—Gamaliel's scholar and Roman citizen—according to the wholesome Jewish custom that required every lad to be taught a trade, knew the craft of a tentmaker and worked at it ;⁹ and repeatedly in his letters he emphasises the duty and dignity of honest toil.¹⁰

At the first no feeling of class-distinction parted the

¹ Luke ii. 22-24 ; and Lev. xii. 8 : "If her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves, or two young pigeons."

² Mark vi. 3.

⁴ E.g. Matt. ix. 36.

⁶ Mark i. 16-20.

⁸ Luke v. 27.

¹⁰ 2 Thess. iii. 6-15 ; Eph. iv. 28.

³ Matt. ix. 9-13.

⁵ John vii. 49.

⁷ John xxi. 2-3.

⁹ Acts xviii. 2-3.

Christian teachers and their hearers ; even the phrase *a way of approach to the multitude* implies a distinction which did not exist. The Faith grew up amongst the People.

2. *The Primitive Christian Outlook on Life made a Strong Appeal to the Multitude.*—Jesus made religion simple. In His hands it ceased to be ritual and became life. If religion were primarily concerned with tithes, washings, fasts, garments, and so forth, it must remain divorced from everyday doings ; the artisan had not time for it ; only the leisured and the well-to-do could observe fully the external sanctities which counted as religion. The great offence of Jesus in the priest's eye was that He set the home of religion in the heart, not the Temple.¹ He declared faith in God to be the right of all, not the prerogative of the few. The people loved this teaching ; “the great multitude heard him gladly.”² His insistent doctrine that God is the Father of us all, and brother-love the charter of true life, struck at the caste-spirit of the ruling ecclesiastics, but woke in men of the crowd the longing for goodness latent in all. So, too, with His unmeasured censures on money-loving,³ and His call to sacrificial service as the true way in life ; the “interests” hated Him, and intrigued for His death ; the multitude followed Him with joy and admiration.

3. *Primitive Christianity met the Needs of the Multitude.*—The Rev. J. Ernest Rattenbury writes of the present relations of the Church and Democracy : “It is not so much that the people find religion hateful as that they find the churches useless. They have no hunger for what the Church provides. It seems to them out of correspondence with their needs.”⁴ Precisely the reverse was true of primitive Christianity. Its Prophetic Witness was hurled at the insincerity,

¹ E.g. Matt. xv. 1-20, especially the latter verse.

² Mark xii. 37.

³ See pp. 140-141.

⁴ *Non-church-going*, pp. 103-4.

pride, tyranny, and love of wealth, which the people knew to be wrong; its Healing Witness dispelled human suffering and poverty, and made Jesus and His first followers the accepted friends of sick and poor; its Saving Witness conquered sin and set sin's prisoners free. Contrast with the words just quoted, concerning the contemporary Church, Luke's description of the Christian community after the great Pentecost: "Having favour with all the people."¹ That was the attitude of the populace to the Church in the beginning. There was joy at the progress of the new Faith. Out of the multitude believers were added to the Church day by day.

4. *Primitive Christianity evoked a more eager Response from the Working-Folk than from any other Class.*

—Against this assertion it is often urged that the multitude which followed Jesus joyfully in the height of His fame was treacherously fickle at the end, and that its clamour of "Crucify!" sealed His fate. The assertion rests on loose reading of the Gospels. The multitudes of whom the earlier sections of the Gospels tell, whom Jesus fed near the Sea of Galilee, whose sick He healed in His itineraries through Galilean cities, whom He taught on the Galilean lake-shore and hillsides, were in the main Galileans, men of the industrial North of which He was Himself a native, as were eleven of the chosen twelve. Apart from the Nazareth riot,² which was due to local jealousies, the men of Galilee rallied to Him from first to last. The last pages of the Gospels show Him travelling toward Jerusalem attended by a crowd from the North, Galilean pilgrims going to keep Passover in the Holy City. At the entry into Jerusalem two crowds meet: His followers from the Northern province, exultantly shouting "Hosanna!" spreading garments and palm-branches in the way; and the Jerusalem Jews, who demand from the pilgrims

¹ Acts ii. 47.

² Luke iv. 16-30.

who their hero is.¹ The contrast is clearly marked in Matthew xxi. 10 :

And when He was come into Jerusalem, *all the city was stirred*, saying, Who is this ? And *the multitudes* said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

The plotting that followed was done by the ecclesiastics, who really ruled Jerusalem—the scribes and Pharisees, whose hypocrisy Jesus roundly condemned. Leagued at last with Judas, they succeeded. In that fateful hour when Pilate, casting about for excuses to release Jesus, bade the crowd choose between Jesus and Barabbas as the Passover freed-man, we see their hand again : “ the chief priests and elders ”² persuaded the Jerusalem mob to shout back that Barabbas should go free but Jesus should go to the cross. “ That throng,” responsive to the rulers’ bidding, “ would be the rabble of the city,”³ the only crowd which the ecclesiastics of Jerusalem could control. From the men of Jesus’ native North they had to conceal their plans lest a popular tumult should break out.⁴

So much for the lifetime of Jesus ; the industrial province of Galilee was true to Him to the end. The next few years showed clearly that the loyalty of the working-people of Galilee would probably be paralleled wherever the new Faith was true to itself. A quarter of a century after the Crucifixion Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth :⁵

Behold your calling, brothers, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called ; but God chose the foolish things of the world that He might put to shame them that are wise ; and

¹ See article “ Multitude,” Hastings’s *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

² Matt. xxvii. 20.

³ David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 485.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 5 : “ Not during the Feast, lest a tumult arise among the people ” = Wait till the city is clear of these provincials, and then we can work our will.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 26-29.

God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong ; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yes, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are : that no flesh should glory before God.

It looked as though the leaven of the Kingdom, thrust into democratic life, would work "till it was all leavened."

II. THE CHURCH AND DEMOCRACY IN LATER CENTURIES ; THE "TWO WAYS"

Seventeen centuries stretch between the Apostolic Age to which the preceding statements refer, and the Industrial Revolution in which most of our present social problems are rooted. Yet the significance of the relations of the Church to Democracy in that long era can be briefly illustrated ; for one need not here weigh evidence with a view to an unqualified decision for or against the Church. History reveals a startling inconsistency among her leaders, displays two distinct schools of thought and action. Throughout the seventeen centuries there are to be found conspicuous examples of loyalty to the primitive attitude ; leaders of the Church have loved and served the people, and won their love and adherence. Throughout the centuries are also written large the annals of Churchmen who deserted or oppressed the people, roused their hate, and caused their defection from the Church. From these diverse chronicles a few examples will show the double strain of relationship which persists to the present day.

Caste-spirit entered the Church very early, even in New Testament times ; but always called forth vehement protests. James, in a passage written expressly against "respect of persons," asserts in condemning words, "Ye have dishonoured the poor man."¹

¹ James ii. 6 ; see also 1 Cor. xi. 22.

Christian literature of the sub-apostolic age carried on the wholesome teaching,¹ and supplies two phrases which will guide us unerringly through the maze of later Church history. Two Ways confronted man, the candidate for baptism was taught: a *Way of Life*, of love to God and man; a *Way of Death*, of hatred and of vice. In the loving duties of the Way of Life the Christian ought to walk. Such a saying as this from the *Didache* (probably 80-100 A.D.) is characteristic of the contrast emphatically made, in early Christian writings, between the "Two Ways."

There are Two Ways, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the Two Ways.

The Way of Life is this. First of all, thou shalt love the God that made thee; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself." (Then follow quotations from the Sermon on the Mount to illustrate the duties of neighbourly love.)

But the Way of Death is this. First of all, it is evil and full of a curse; murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, witchcrafts, plunderings, false witnessings, hypocrisies . . . not pitying the poor man, not toiling for him that is oppressed with toil, not recognising Him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the creatures of God, turning away from him that is in want, oppressing him that is afflicted, advocates of the wealthy, unjust judges of the poor, altogether sinful. May ye be delivered, my children, from these things."²

The two phrases indicate the opportunities and the perils which have confronted the Church in all generations.

Dr. Orr sums up the services of Christianity to the ancient world, while her leaders followed the Way of Life, as (a) a new spirit of active charity, (b) a new ideal of moral purity, (c) purification of the family, (d) the elevation of woman, (e) the amelioration of the condition of the slave, and (f) the consecration of labour.

¹ There is a useful discussion of the social outlook and activity of the Primitive Church in *Christ and Civilisation*, chap. iv.

² *Didache*, i. 5.

The picture grows darker in the age of Constantine. Church life tends towards the Way of Death. The Emperor's proclamation of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire was disastrous to the spiritual influence of the Church. Paganism dethroned by decree gained the throne again in the guise of officialised Christianity. How the World secularised the Church, and how, with the rise of the Papacy, lust for wealth and temporal power became the ruling passion from Peter's chair downwards, history, secular and ecclesiastical, records.¹

The first contrast chosen as a type of the Two Ways in the Church's life belongs to the thirteenth century.

Francis of Assisi, renouncing wealth, vowing his life to poverty and the love of the needy, founding an Order of disciples bound by the same vow, is an outstanding example of the Church leader who drew the poor around him, and in whom they felt the Church to be their friend. He trod the Way of Life. John Richard Green's description of the coming of the Grey Friars of Francis to England (A.D. 1224) is to the point :

To the towns especially the coming of the Friars was a religious revolution. They had been left for the most part to the worst and most ignorant of the clergy, the mass-priest, whose sole subsistence lay in his fees. Burgher and artisan were left to spell out what religion they might from the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church's ritual, or the scriptural pictures and sculptures which were graven on the walls of its minsters. We can hardly wonder at the burst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher, whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and the market-place. . . . The work of the Friars was physical as well as moral. The rapid progress of population within the boroughs had outstripped the sanitary regulations of the Middle Ages, and fever or plague, or the more terrible scourge of leprosy, festered in the wretched hovels

¹ See, e.g. Hobhouse, *The Church and the World in Idea and in History*, chaps. iii., iv. and v.

of the suburbs. It was to haunts such as these that Francis had pointed his disciples, and the Grey Brethren at once fixed themselves in the meanest and poorest quarters of each town. Their first work lay in the noisome lazar-houses; it was amongst the lepers that they commonly chose the site of their homes. At London they settled in the shambles of Newgate; at Oxford they made their way to the swampy ground between its walls and the streams of Thames.¹

Comment is needless. The powerful hold of the Grey Friars on English life, in those days of strenuous and sacrificial toil, before the blight of worldliness touched them, was due to their rediscovery of the secret of primitive Christianity. In them the Faith lived again amongst the People.

Out of the century of Francis also comes this satire, which more shrewdly than a lengthy syllabus of facts lays bare the other Way, world-conforming, self-regardful, greedy of gold, the Way of Death.

Here beginneth (the parody runs) the gospel according to the Silver Marks. . . . It came to pass that a certain poor clerk came to the court of the Lord Pope, and cried out saying :

"Have mercy on me, ye gatekeepers of the Pope, for the hand of poverty hath touched me. I am poor and hungry; I pray you to help my misery."

Then were they wroth, and said; "Friend, thy poverty perish with thee. Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou knowest not the odour of money."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that thou shalt not enter into the joy of thy Lord until thou hast given the last farthing."

Then the poor man went out and sold his cloak and his coat and all that he had, and gave it to the cardinals and gatekeepers and chamberlains. But they said, "What is this among so many?" And they cast him out beyond the gate, and he wept bitterly, and could find none to comfort him.

Then there came to the court a rich clerk, fat and broad and heavy, who in his wrath had slain a man.

First he gave to the gatekeeper, then to the chamber-

¹ *Short History of the English People*, pp. 149, 150.

lain, then to the cardinals, and they thought they were about to receive more.

But the Lord Pope, hearing that the cardinals and servants had many gifts from the clerk, fell sick unto death.

Then unto him the rich man sent an electuary of gold and silver, and straightway he was cured.

Then the Lord Pope called unto him the cardinals and servants, and said unto them: "Brethren, take heed that no one seduce you with empty words. I set you an example: Even as I take, so shall ye take."¹

Nothing could sever the Church more effectively from the poor than the covetousness here pilloried. It bred intrigue and tyranny and viler sins. Black-blotted pages in the Church's history tell how love of money in the ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages proved a root of all kinds of evil.²

The Reformation period supplies the second example. The application of the social teachings of the Gospel brought the Reformers face to face with the Two Ways. Their choices were fraught with most momentous consequence. Calvin and his great disciple Knox taught that city and State must express the Will of God in all things. Luther, dauntless in leadership against the Papacy, shrank from identifying himself with the cause of the German peasants who, fired by his preaching of freedom, claimed their simple human rights; he threw in his lot with the Princes who oppressed them; and his betrayal of the peasantry made an ineffaceable mark on German democracy, alienated masses from the Lutheran cause, and is the main historic explanation of the gulf between Lutheranism and the people in Germany to-day.

Geneva, the home of John Calvin's great social-religious experiment, was in his day a city of about

¹ Cited in Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. i., pp. 35-36.

² A vivid picture of the money-loving Church of the Middle Ages will be found in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. chap. xix.

12,000 souls, a city "free, homogeneous, distinguished by a strong local patriotism, a stalwart communal life." His first attempt to suppress civic evils roused the "libertines," and the preacher was banished. In 1541 Geneva recalled him. To Calvin it was unthinkable that public affairs could be exempt from Divine control. The Bible, he held, taught a doctrine of society to which the State must conform. Consequently Geneva's laws and their administration were direct concerns of the Church of God; in these respects she must therefore investigate and inspire, criticise or commend. So he came back to essay "the high task of making Geneva a City of God, a real theocracy, which should be a model to the world." As Dr. Fairbairn puts it: "Calvin was resolved, so far as he had power, to make the Church what it had not been, but what it ought to be, an institution organised for the creation of a moral mankind."¹ The extent to which he succeeded, and the blemishes of his rule, concern us less than the ideal he restored to the Church. Public and private life were to be purged of greed and immorality, public office held as a sacred trust for which the holder was responsible to God, the poor befriended in their poverty, the honest way of work thrown open to all²: these were the social demands he made on Geneva in the name of God and His Church.

Calvin's success, and the lofty ideal of the City of God he brought back to Christian thought, widely influenced the course of the Reformation in Western Europe. In Scotland, when the Reformation had triumphed under the intense personality of John Knox, Calvinism shaped the Church organisation and social

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii., p. 374.

² "Calvin laid it down, as one of the rules of government, that it was the duty of the State to provide useful employment for every man that could work; and what is more, he introduced new industries (e.g. cloth and weaving) into the city, in order to enable it to perform its obligations."—*Christ and Civilisation*, p. 350.

framework of the Scottish nation. Calvin's principle of representative government fashioned Presbyterianism, and prepared the people for democratic government in the affairs of State later on. "In his *Book of Discipline*, drawn up in 1560, Knox propounded a splendid programme of social reform. The scheme proposed that the Church, in addition to the maintenance of public worship, should in every parish provide (a) that all unable to earn a living should be supported out of the public funds ; (b) that all able to work should be compelled to do so ; (c) that every child should be afforded an opportunity of education ; (d) that every youth of promise should have an open way to the universities through a system of high schools. The scheme was not completely carried out owing to the lack of funds. The endowments on which Knox relied were, in the confusion that followed the establishment of the Reformation, sequestered for the most part from the Church, either by the Crown or the nobles, and nothing was left for social experiments. Still, though the scheme was quite unattainable at the time, Knox bequeathed it to the nation as a great social ideal ; and it is very largely to that ideal that Scotland owes the great educational advantages which it possesses to-day."¹

Non-Church-going is not so acute a problem in Scotland as in England ; and south of the Tweed, Presbyterianism, ministering chiefly to the Scottish element in English cities, experienced no check in Church membership through the first decade of the present century. History suggests one explanation. The Genevan model of Church and People united in the upbuilding of the City of God on earth, and the democratic system of Church-government in Presbyterianism, have held Scottish democracy in closer touch with the Church of its fathers than has been the case with English democracy and the English Free

¹ *Christ and Civilisation*, pp. 352-3.

Churches, which lack so clear an apprehension of the unity of life, economic and ecclesiastical.

With Luther affairs went otherwise. His problem was more difficult than that awaiting Calvin or Knox. Calvin had a city to conquer, Knox a little land responsive to his democratic fervour. The Germany of Luther's day was part of a vast empire, politically disorganised, broken up into principedoms, and into smaller territories under the sway of the great cities. Such a movement as the Reformation, aiming at stupendous changes in the religious habits of a nation divided against itself, would necessarily be compelled sooner or later to choose one of two lines. It could trust to its original method of permeation, leavening the thought and bending the will of the multitude, man by man, exercising an intensive influence which some day would upheave the tyrannies forged by sin ; or it could ally itself in times of crisis with the strength of favouring princes and other potentates, using their might to fight its battles, and in return serving their ends as occasion might require. In the crucial hour Luther chose the latter course, sided with his friends the Princes against their peasantry, with results socially and religiously disastrous.

The peasants of Germany were serfs. Feudal lords had gradually enclosed the common lands, and appropriated the produce of the woods and rivers. Church taxes were heavy ; food-prices rose ; when harvests were bad the poor starved. Insurrections were frequent, but, until Luther's day, easily suppressed. Luther preached liberty and equal rights ; human authority should be resisted when its mandates conflicted with the law of God ; brotherly love would lift the burdens of the poor ; the peasant, with the Word of God in his hand, was as instructed as the priest. This teaching swept through the peasant districts like a flame. Peasant preachers expounded the Word and began to baptise. There was a democratic return to

the simplest form of Christianity. Then the peasants turned from freedom in matters of the soul to freedom in matters of the common livelihood. Right was to govern life : what right was there in their degraded lot ? Was it right that the lord should enclose woods, alienate common lands, compel them as serfs to do his field-work while their fields stood untilled ? Was it right that tithes must be paid though their children starved ? The old agitation broke out anew. At Memmingen, in 1525, the famous "Twelve Articles" of the peasant-bands were drawn up.

The preamble repudiated the idea that the insurgents' "new Gospel" implied the extirpation of spiritual and temporal authority ; on the contrary, they quoted texts to show that its essence was love, patience, and unity, and that the aim of the peasants was that all men should live in accordance with its precepts. As means thereto they demanded that the choice of pastors should be vested in each community, which should also have power to remove such as behaved unseemly. The great tithes they were willing to pay, and they proposed measures for their collection, and for the application of the surplus to the relief of the poor, and, in case of necessity, to the expenses of war, or to meet the demands of the tax-gatherer ; but the small tithes they would not pay, because God had created the beasts of the field as a free gift for the use of mankind. They would no longer be villeins, because Christ had made all men free ; but they would gladly obey such authority as was elected and set over them as it be by God appointed. They claimed the right to take ground-game, fowls, and fish in flowing water ; they demanded the restoration of woods, meadows, and plough-lands to the community, the renunciation of new-fangled services, and payment of peasants for those which they rendered, the establishment of judicial rents, the even administration of justice, and the abolition of death-dues, which ruined widows and orphans. Finally, they required that all their grievances should be tested by the Word of God ; if aught which they had demanded were proved to be contrary to Scripture, they agreed to give it up, even though the demand had been granted ; and on the other hand, they asked that their lords should submit to the same test, and relinquish any privileges which

might hereinafter be shown to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, although they were not included in the present list of grievances.¹

Open conflict quickly followed. Bands of unsuspecting peasants were massacred by the troops of the feudal lords. The Peasants' War began, and Luther had to act. The neutrality he observed before the strife opened was suddenly abandoned. Fearful of the effect of the insurrection on the prospects of the Reformation, he made a frenzied attack on the peasants. Ignoring his own teaching, and the part it had played in quickening the popular sense of injustice, Luther rushed into the fray as the champion of the nobles. The title of his pamphlet is a sufficient index to its contents, *Against the Murderous Thieving Hordes of Peasants*. "A prince can now better merit heaven with bloodshed than with prayer," he wrote; and in a later letter to a noble: "The ass *will* have blows, and the people *will* be ruled by force."

The slaughter which ensued was horrible. "For the whole of Germany a moderate estimate puts the number of victims at one hundred thousand." Only selfish considerations restrained the most ferocious of the lords. "If all the peasants are killed," said one, "where shall we get other peasants to make provision for us?"

It was tragedy on a colossal scale, and yet illustrative of what happens whenever ecclesiasticism betrays the people. Its typical significance lends emphasis to the verdict of history on Luther's desertion of the peasant's cause. Dr. Pollard continues:

In its religious aspect the Peasants' Revolt was an appeal of the poor and oppressed to "divine justice" against the oppressor. They had eagerly applied to their lords the biblical anathemas against the rich, and interpreted the beatitudes as a promise of redress for the wrongs of the poor. They were naturally unconvinced

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii., p. 180.

by Luther's declaration that the Gospel only guaranteed a spiritual and not a temporal emancipation, and that spiritual liberty was the only kind of freedom to which they had a right. They felt that such a doctrine might suit Luther and his knightly and *bourgeois* supporters, who already enjoyed an excessive temporal franchise, but that in certain depths of temporal misery the cultivation of spiritual and moral welfare was impossible. It was a counsel of perfection to advise them to be content with spiritual solace when they complained that they could not feed their bodies. They did not regard poverty as compatible with the "divine justice" to which they appealed; and when their appeal was met by the slaughter of a hundred thousand of their numbers, their faith in the new Gospel received a fatal blow. Their aspirations, which had been so vividly expressed in the popular literature of the last five years, were turned to despair, and they relapsed into a state of mind which was not far removed from materialistic atheism. Who knows, they asked, what God is, or whether there is a God? . . .

It was little wonder that the organisers of the Lutheran Church afterwards found the peasants deaf to their exhortations, or that Melancthon was once constrained to admit that the people abhorred himself and his fellow-divines.¹

"The evil that men do lives after them." Luther's betrayal of the Peasants is branded on the memory of German democracy. "The great leaders of German Marxian Socialism have been, almost without exception, hostile to Christianity."² As far as Lutheranism is concerned, the Peasant Massacre has been a main source of their bitterness. Knox's democratic Christianity leavens Scotland to this hour; Luther's anti-social, anti-human treachery to the peasant cause forced home a wedge which reft a mighty mass of the German proletariat from Protestantism.

English democratic life is tinctured with the same spirit. We have seen how Marx's "International" brought the pioneer English Socialists and Trade Union

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii., pp. 192-3.

² Stoddart, *The New Socialism*, p. 126.

leaders into touch with their Continental comrades. Some day the full story of the influence of German working-class antagonism to the Churches on English working-class thought will be traced ; it will be an unveiling of the persistence of the evil effects of the anti-democratic policy of Continental Churches. Along with collectivist economics the German Marxists imparted to English Labour leaders of the last generation a bias against ecclesiastical Christianity. The tradition of hostility lives on in this generation. Luther sowed tares and wheat, and both in Germany and England tares and wheat still grow in direct succession from his first sowing.

The final example of the Two Ways brings us to the eve of the Industrial Revolution, and so to Modern England. The Way of Life in which Francis of Assisi led his preaching Friars in the thirteenth century, along which Calvin and Knox guided the Reformation in Western Europe, was the Way which John Wesley and the Methodist preachers took in the eighteenth century. Side by side with the opening stages of the Industrial Revolution ran the Methodist Movement, that set in motion "the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor."¹

"Put yourself in the place of every poor man, and deal with him as you would God should deal with you," was Wesley's rule for the Stewards of the Methodist Society in London.² "Christianity," he asserts, "is essentially a social religion ; to make it a solitary one is indeed to destroy it." Perfect love toward God cannot exist apart from perfect love toward man, is the reiterated doctrine in his sermons and pamphlets. How literally and fearlessly he applied this belief to

¹ J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, p. 740.

² *Works*, vol. ii., p. 59.

the social conditions of his day is seen in typical extracts from his preaching.

The sermon on "The Use of Money" should be read in full. Note the bearing of these sentences on the changes which were then beginning to alter radically national customs and methods of commerce.

We cannot, if we love every one as ourselves, hurt any one *in his substance*. . . . We cannot, consistently with brotherly love, sell our goods below the market-price; we cannot study to ruin our neighbour's trade, in order to advance our own; much less can we entice away, or receive any of his servants or workmen of whom he has need. None can gain by swallowing up his neighbour's substance, without gaining the damnation of hell.¹

Again, from the eighth of the series, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount,"

May not this be another reason why rich men shall so hardly enter the kingdom of heaven? A vast majority of them are under a curse, under the peculiar curse of God; inasmuch as, in the general tenour of their lives, they are not only robbing God, continually embezzling and wasting their Lord's goods, and, by that very means, corrupting their own souls, but also robbing the poor, the hungry, the naked; wronging the widow and the fatherless; and making themselves accountable for all the want, affliction, and distress, which they may but do not remove. Yea, doth not the blood of all those who perish for want of what they either lay up, or lay out needlessly, cry against them from the earth?²

Under preaching as plain and forceful as this, the manual workers of England were gathered into the Methodist Societies. Wesley's *Rules* required all members of Society to "continue to evidence their desire of salvation: First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practised"—swearing, drunkenness,

¹ *Fifty-three Sermons*, p. 707.

² *Ibid.*, p. 417. Both these sermons form part of the doctrinal standards of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

traffic in spirituous liquors, commercial dishonesty, smuggling, taking of unlawful interest, the hoarding of wealth, are among the evils specified. "Secondly, by doing good, by being, in every kind, merciful after their power ; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men, to their bodies . . . and to their souls." "Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God."¹ In such teaching and practice Christianity recovered the fearless faith and simple ethics of its primitive days ; and once again it won the heart of the people.

The Way of Life in the Church can be plainly traced from Wesley's day to our own. It runs through the prison-reform agitation of John Howard and the anti-slavery campaign of Wilberforce and Clarkson ; through the fight for the Factory Acts won by the persistence of Sadler, Oastler, and Shaftesbury ; through the "Christian Socialist" propaganda of the "fifties" with Maurice and Kingsley leading the march ; on to the Christian Social Movement of these days, founding its Settlements, Children's Homes, Farm Colonies like Lingfield and Hadleigh, and a multitude of other agencies for assisting the needy, and making its influence on social progress felt through the denominational Social Service Unions and the Socialist Leagues of the Anglican and Free Churches.

What of the Way of Death in the modern Church ? Seldom do the Two Ways confront a Church leader so dramatically and conspicuously as in Luther's fateful hour of choice. More often the Way of Death is a mental attitude ; it predisposes men to bow to wealth and forget poverty ; to accept the existing social order as though it were the Will of God, and to offer the resistance of inertia or prejudice to attempts at social redress ; to maim the Gospel Message by ignoring its social principles, behests, and ideals. It is a peril to which all are prone, but two classes in the Church are

¹ *Works*, vol. viii., pp. 270-1.

peculiarly susceptible to it, capitalists and the Christian ministry: capitalists, because of their financial stake in the *status quo* which, as Wesley warned and Shaftesbury proved, may easily warp the judgment and deflect the sympathies of good men; ministers, because, where the constitution of the Church is undemocratic or but partially democratic, constant association with the well-to-do as "office-bearers" may tinge them with anti-democratic feeling, while their position as almoners tends to obscure the elementary claims of the poor to *justice*, and to suggest that charity is the whole social duty of the Christian man.

Such an attitude is a Way of Death. It explains, in no small degree, the paralysis which has stricken the Churches. Incidents like the following, culled from the *History of Trade Unionism*, are branded on the memory of the artisan. In the early "seventies" Trade Unionism passed through a period of rapid expansion. Under Joseph Arch even the agricultural labourers began to organise and claim a living wage.

The farmers, wherever they dared, ruthlessly "victimised" any man who joined the Union. It is needless to say that they received the cordial support of the rural magistracy. In aid of a lock-out near Chipping Norton, two justices, *who happened both to be clergymen*, sent sixteen labourers' wives, some with infants at the breast, to prison with hard labour, for "intimidating" certain non-Union men. . . .

At the great meeting held at Exeter Hall on behalf of the labourers . . . the only ecclesiastic who appeared on the platform was Archbishop (afterwards Cardinal) Manning. In fact, the spirit in which the rural clergy viewed this social upheaval is not unfairly typified by the public utterance of a learned bishop. On September 2, 1872, Dr. Ellicott, the Bishop of Gloucester, speaking at a meeting of the Gloucester Agricultural Society, significantly suggested the village horsepond as a fit destination for the "agitators" or delegates sent by the Union to open new branches.¹

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 317, 318.

What has resulted from this attitude of mind in the Free Churches is described in a recent essay by the Rev. J. Ernest Rattenbury :

There are great industrial centres, for example, in which the manufacturers of half a century ago were generally Nonconformists. Their relation to their workmen was often kindly and paternal. They erected chapels very largely at their own expense. Their workmen were to be found in the chapels on Sunday as well as in the factories on Mondays, and it would have been almost impossible for master and workman to have been other than master and workman on Sunday as well as on Monday. The rise of the limited liability company on the side of capital, and the growing consciousness of personal dignity on the part of labour, has made this relation difficult in many places. The authority of the master on Sunday has been resented. The tradition of the benevolent despot in the chapel has been carried on by the smaller despot who is not benevolent under the new social conditions. The workers have made their demands as Christian brothers in the Church. These demands have been resented. The result is that in many industrial districts the workers are found outside the churches, combining very often in social fellowship, still respecting, and sometimes worshipping the Christ, but unable to understand His Church.¹

III. THE CHURCH AND DEMOCRACY TO-DAY : A PROBLEM OF THE "TWO WAYS"

What Lowell calls a "beacon-moment" comes to the Church again.

Not an ear in court or market for the low, foreboding cry
Of those crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose feet earth's
chaff must fly.

Yet surely in the camp of God there are listeners. The eternal choice must be made afresh. When it seemed that all went well with the Church then the need to test her fidelity to the original Christian standards, though necessary, was not evident; congregations were maintained, schools flourished, the

¹ *Non-Church-going*, pp.108-9.

measurable area of Church life expanded. Decline compels self-testing, the restating of values, reshaping of purposes, recasting of methods.

To what conclusions does the discussion of the past and present relations of the Church to Democracy in this and the foregoing chapters lead ?

1. The tragic and deplorable breach between Church and Democracy is seen to be a chief explanation of the present decline in the Churches. To lose touch with the people is to lose ground everywhere.

2. A long history of oppression and privation lies behind and explains the attitude and demands of present-day Democracy. Therefore only patient and persistent adherence to the full Christian programme will straighten out the tangle of misunderstanding between Church and people. The memories of long-enduring grievances are not to be banished in a day.

3. The aims and ideals of British Democracy are essentially Christian. To restore a wholesome Standard of Life to all ; to make possible for all a full development of physical, mental, and moral endowments ; to resist the divisive and destructive policy of war, and to upbuild the nations into a Brotherhood of Humanity, are purposes in direct harmony with Christian teaching.

4. The primitive Christian mission included tasks akin to those which engross contemporary Democracy. Its Prophetic Witness assailed social wrong, asserted the authority of righteousness, and built up, as a model of the Christian social order, a Christian community in which love of money had no place, and brotherly love reigned. Its Healing Witness banished sickness and poverty, and taught the responsibility of each for all. Its Saving Witness made bad men good, founding the New World on the basis of the New Man. These tasks were carried through despite fierce persecution. Primitive Christians were extremists in faith and practice ; they were men of no-compromise.

5. Whenever the Church has been whole-heartedly

true to her first commission she has won the heart of the people. It was so in the Apostolic and sub-apostolic ages ; so in the Reformation days with Calvin and Knox, and with Luther until he deserted the peasants ; so with the Wesleys and their Methodist helpers.

6. A return to the spirit, outlook, and extremism of Primitive Christianity is the need of the Church to-day. She must bear the Threefold Witness in its fullness, and at any cost.

The Church's rightful attitude is manifest. Not because Democracy's name is Legion, but because loyalty to her Lord and her mission requires it, she must work with and for the people. Patronage and flattery are out of place ; Democracy needs neither ; the Church should scorn to offer them. Charity at its best, charity warm with love, is an insufficient discharge of her responsibility ; charity at its worst, consciously condescending, is sin against the Christian brotherhood, which knows no respect of persons. Justice, not charity, is the Christian watchword. The Way of Life for the Church to-day is the old way of righteousness. The prophetic call is to every age. "Thus hath the Lord of Hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother : and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor ; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."¹ It is a hard Way to take, as it always has been. "Far in front the Cross stands ready." The Church must press on to bear it, following Jesus Christ "the Upright."

The Cross means war with the World. The existing industrial order is in many ways anti-Christian. It stimulates greed and untruth, inequitably divides the fruits of labour, makes money the prize, crowds out

¹ Zech. vii, 9-10.

culture of mind and soul, and leaves the multitude within the verge of want. These things are wrong. Let the Church say so. Her Prophetic Witness requires this testimony.

The Cross means the expulsion of the World from the realms of the Church. The existing ecclesiastical order must be reshaped on the lines of the recovered ideal. New Testament principles have been dishonoured just to the extent to which money has been the passport to honour and authority in the councils of the Church. The spiritual man is the fit man to rule, be he poor or rich. Until the highest offices in the Church are accessible in practice, as they are open in theory, to the poorest saint, the modern Christian community will fail to parallel the societies which grew up under the Prophetic Witness of the apostles.

To take up the Cross is to bear the sicknesses and carry the sorrows of mankind. The necessity of exercising a Healing Witness should lead the Church into crusades to prevent disease and destitution. The healing ministries of Jesus and the apostles, and the fight waged against poverty in the first Christian societies are the precedents ; but the Christian passion that impels men to love their neighbours as themselves is, all precedents apart, the irrevocable warrant for social service.

To think of what should be wakes the thought of what might have been. The campaigns against disease and destitution became preventive in the nineteenth century. Then the rapid progress of scientific knowledge began to disclose resources for the *prevention* of illness, and the writings of the early Socialists challenged the *necessity* of poverty. If the Healing Witness of the Christian pioneers had been the accepted norm of Church duty in the last century, the scientist would have found the Church eager to work with him in the spread of knowledge, and in the creation of a social conscience concerning the laws of

health ; and the Socialist would have found Churchmen anxious, not to suppress him and his message as dangerous to the existing unideal order, but to test his theory, to approve it in so far as it accorded with Christian idealism, and to labour with him for the triumph of justice and fraternity in the world's work. The preventable sickness and the needless economic distress of the past generation tell what Humanity suffered for lack of a prophet-voice to make men hear what God declared to student and to dreamer.

The heart of the mystery of the Cross is redemption from sin. The Saving Witness of the Church is impotent to-day where she discards the prophet's mantle and the robe of the healer. The unity of life is the master-thought of the New Age ; it is also a Christian doctrine, a key in the hands of the Church to unlock the problems of to-day. History shows her effective in evangelisation when she has grappled with evil along the whole frontier, when the betterment of body and mind and soul, of citizen and city, has been her accepted responsibility. Evangelism detached from social conviction and social service finds its area of effective appeal shrinking year by year. Evangelism which, like that of Isaiah, declares, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow," and in the same breath demands, "Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" ; evangelism, whose appeal is to the latent heroism and power of service and sacrifice, not to the instinct of personal safety and gain ; evangelism which summons men to lifelong rebellion against the base and tyrannous and mercenary, and to all hazards for the truth's sake ; this evangelism, Scriptural in its content, all-comprehending in its appeal, must constrain, convince, and conquer. It is the Call of the Cross,

CHAPTER III

NON-CHURCH-GOING

THE problem of Non-Church-going requires discussion in its economic, moral, and intellectual aspects. The training of a new race of Church-goers, by a wiser use of the educational opportunities of the Sunday school, will also be considered, in a succeeding chapter.

I. THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF NON-CHURCH-GOING

The influence of economic conditions on Church-going is clearly to be traced in the simplest grouping of modern society into the Poor, the Middle-Class, and the Rich—giving to the second of the three terms, the Middle-Class, a relevance wide enough to include all who are normally out of the reach of imminent want, and who also escape the peril of possessing wealth sufficient to make work a matter of choice, not of necessity.

1. *Non-Church-going and the Poor*

Mr. Chiozza Money's class of "The Poor," viz. all whose family income is less than £160 per annum,¹ is too large for our present purpose. Wage-earners whose regular weekly pay is from £2 to £3 per week have an outlook on life notably different from that of

¹ See p. 53.

the sweated home-worker whose pittance just keeps the wolf from the door, or of the casual labourer with whom life alternates from feast to famine.

The "Poverty Line" has a distinct meaning in social economics. It is true that the number of dependent members of the family, local variations in rent-charge, cost of food, fuel, etc., and many other considerations, make it impossible to fix on a figure and say that all whose weekly earnings fall below are within the "Poverty Line." Mr. Stopford Brooke's definition, however, commands general assent, and serves our end best: "I mean by Poverty," he says, "that condition in which for want of means no just development of the natural powers of any man or woman can be reached." A large proportion of the thirty-nine millions of the people of the United Kingdom having annual family incomes under £160 will come within this definition. Mr. Will Reason, after a close survey of the data, concludes that to estimate the very poor in England and Wales as numbering twelve millions may be to under-state rather than to over-state the case.¹

What is the attitude of the poor, the actually and customarily poor, to Church-going? In addition to personal knowledge, two sources of information are open, (a) the judgment of those who organised the Church-attendance censuses in London and Liverpool, and of competent critics of the census results, (b) voices from the ranks of the poor which tell authentically what some among the millions think and feel.

(a) The London and Liverpool Church census-takers agree that non-Church-going is commonest in the poorest neighbourhoods. In the London census-volume, this conclusion is abundantly illustrated by the essayists who review the returns.

Mr. Arthur Sherwell presents an instructive table. He contrasts the fourteen London boroughs with the

¹ *Poverty*, pp. 29-41,

best ratios of Church attendance, and the fourteen with the lowest ratios, and reaches this conclusion :

Without pressing the point unduly or attempting to suggest an absolutely precise relation of cause and effect, it is a significant fact that all the typical overcrowded and poverty-ridden boroughs of the East and the South are found in the group where the ratios of church attendance are lowest, while the prosperous suburban and wealthy West-London boroughs are found in the group where the ratios of church attendance are highest.¹

Mr. Percy Alden writes of East London :

An examination of the attendance figures in the different districts seems to prove that the poorer the district the less inclination is there to attend a place of worship ; and if this be so, it can only be accounted for either on the ground that poverty brings its disability and makes attendance impossible, or on the supposition that poverty and the social conditions implied by poverty produce a condition of carelessness and apathy, which will account not only for the infrequency of attendance at church or chapel, but for the lack of interest in life as a whole.²

Mr. Walter R. Warren reports of St. Pancras in North London :

The great mass of poor people of St. Pancras are unaffected by the religious centres in their midst. Religious meetings and services do not attract them. For the most part, they live a miserable, struggling existence from week to week, over-tired by their daily labour or the lack of it, depressed by the deadening sense of their dull surroundings, careless of most matters beyond their own door or the public-house, and generally suspicious of anything in the nature of a homily or good advice."³

Mr. C. F. G. Masterman summarises the position in South London :

In South London the poor (except the Roman Catholic poor) do not attend service on Sunday, though there

¹ *The Religious Life of London*, pp. 86-87.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

are a few churches and missions which gather some, and forlorn groups can be collected by a liberal granting of relief.

The working man does not come to church. A few small communities of Primitive Methodists, Baptists, Salvationists, and similar bodies, as a general rule, represent his contribution to the religious life of the nation.¹

Of Greater London Mr. George Haw points the same moral :

Observe that where the working classes are crowding into Greater London, and the middle classes deserting [those neighbourhoods] . . . the church attendance is at its lowest."²

The report on the Free Church census in Liverpool abounds with similar reflections. This sentence is typical :

One cannot be blind to the fact that on the whole the Free Churches have failed to secure the wage-earning classes.³

(b) We strike another vein of information in the self-told stories of the rank and file.

Here is the story of "George Meek, Bath-Chair-man," whom Mr. H. G. Wells discovered and persuaded to set out on paper the romance of his life. Errand-boy, shoeblack, hop-picker, sandwich-board carrier, and bakehouse-hand ; emigrant to America to work on his cousin's farm, immigrant back in England ; billiard-marker in a Liberal Club for two years, then a spell of "out-of-work" ; in despair he takes out a licence at Eastbourne as a bath-chair-man, and follows that precarious "profession" off and on for eighteen years, filling in the spaces with unpaid itinerant Socialist propaganda : such is his career in outline up to 1909.

Now George Meek, as Mr. Wells says, "is at once a very typical and a very extraordinary man ; he stands

¹ *The Religious Life of London*, p. 201.

² *Ibid.*, p. 339.

³ W. J. Rowland, *The Free Churches and the People*, p. 22.

for an immense class in the modern community, and he is extraordinary in being able to reveal almost everything he stands for." His is in truth a voice from the rank and file : what has he to say of the Churches ? It is not pleasant reading. Piecing the "religious" fragments of his life together the story runs thus :

My people had been Church of England to the extent that they conformed to that communion when attendance at a place of worship appeared to them imperative : that is to say at christenings, confirmations, weddings, and funerals of members of the family. Otherwise I never remember them attending any place of worship. Beyond being obliged to repeat the usual little child's prayers and hymns when very young, I had no religious teaching at home. I am of opinion that the "gentry and clergy" were usually regarded as our natural enemies. I know the parson was usually spoken of with more or less derision. Canon Lowe (a "benevolent old gentleman" who lent the lad *The Boy's Own Paper* and other magazines) was an exception."¹

Ruth, with whom he "kept company," led him, a youth of twenty, to attend chapel for a time. A tactless minister severed this slight link. His last and third touch with Church life was on this wise :

Once when I was in London I heard the revivalists Sankey and Moody in a large building in Stepney Green. I "got religion" badly for a week or two, but soon reverted to my early agnosticism. I have never been troubled much about my "soul." *I have had too much bother to live in this world to worry myself much about the next.* I have no doubt I took up religion the last time to please Ruth.²

That is the whole place of Church worship in George Meek's life. He, like millions more, had to keep up what Mazzini called "a continual duel with want." Statements and reflections like these are scattered over his pages.

I have always longed to be able to earn enough to be able to pay my way honestly. I hardly ever have.

¹ *George Meek, Bath-Chair-man*, p. 81.

² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Many a time we have stripped the clothes off our backs and put away our bed for rent.

I am writing this on the 19th of August, 1908. During the month so far I have earned only one casual shilling. I have a small contract job, but I am free from 12 o'clock every day. And the other men are standing about in glum hopelessness.

I am still cursed with this casual employment. If there was a God I would pray earnestly and fervently that He would save every man and woman who reads this from that curse. Better be dead and buried out of the way than live so. Blessed are the dead! they are no longer hungry, nor have they rent to pay.

Is enduring spirituality probable on these terms? Is it possible to any but the most robust natures? *If there was a God*—destitution shattered faith!

George Meek may stand for the unskilled male worker; what of the wife and mother in the poor man's home? A fund of first-hand knowledge of the married working woman in South-east London will be found in articles contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* by Miss Anna Martin.¹ In this particular neighbourhood casual waterside labour is the chief occupation of the men. It is a life of high pay alternating with times when there is nothing, or next to nothing, to do. "When the days of famine come . . . the women struggle with indescribable heroism; they persuade the landlord to let the rent run, they strain their credit with the grocer, they pawn everything pawnable, they go out charing, they take in washing."

This is the daily round of one woman, factory worker and housewife:

I rise at 4.45, sweep the place a bit and get my husband his breakfast. He must be off before six. Then I wake and wash the children, give them each a slice of bread-and-butter and the remains of the tea, and leave out the oats and sugar for Harry to prepare for the rest later on. (Harry is ten years old.) Then I open up the beds and take the baby to Mrs. T. My own work begins at

¹ Dec. 1910, Jan. 1911.

7 a.m. At 8.30 the firm sends us round a mug of tea, and I eat the bread-and-butter I have brought with me. I used to come home in the dinner hour, but my feet are now so bad that I get a halfpenny cup of coffee in a shop and eat the rest of what I have brought. At 4.30 I have another cup of tea and get home a little before 7 p.m. I do up the hearth, get my husband his supper, and make the beds. Then I get out the mending, and am usually in bed by 11. On Saturday I leave work at noon so as to take the washing to the baths.

Here is a picture of another side of the married working woman's life in East London :

My man was in the Infirmary 11 months ; I had four children to keep, but he had always been a good man to me, and I made up my mind he should find his home together when he came out. It turns me sick now to remember how I starved and pinched and scraped. When he came home and found I had not parted with a thing, he cried like a child.

To talk of the utter irreligiousness of the poor in face of such self-forgetful industry and sacrifice is sheer cant. But if Church-going is regarded as a means to the culture of a rich religious experience, how much time for Church-going or for fineness of aspiration does life like this afford ? "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; then that which is spiritual."

Economic disabilities lie at the root of non-Church-going among the very poor. Some Churchmen wish the Church to let social questions alone ; one thing is certain, social questions will never let the Church alone.

To another phase of this inescapable problem of poverty reference will be made when the moral aspects of the question are before us.

2. *Non-Church-going and the Middle-Class*

The Middle-Class, in this connection, include, as was said, all who are neither within the reach of

imminent want, nor are the possessors of wealth sufficient to make work a matter of choice, not of necessity. It is in these intermediate strata of British life that the Churches, especially the Free Churches, are most effective : among skilled artisans, teachers, shopkeepers, manufacturers, civil servants, and other representatives of the advance guard of the industrial army. These staff the Churches and Sunday schools. They and their families make up "the usual congregation," along with a few of the actually poor, and here and there a family of the obviously rich. Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, in the analysis of the Church-going habits of South London, already quoted, goes on to say :

The tradesmen and middle-class of the poorer boroughs exhibit an active religious life, mainly gathered in the larger Nonconformist bodies, especially the Baptists.

The residents in the suburbs crowd their churches and chapels, and support with impartiality and liberality all forms of organised religion.

The Brotherhood and its associated Movements draw most of their workers from this constituency, and record their greatest successes among the better-paid artisan populations.

Still confining discussion to the economic aspects of the question, we have (a) to account for the hold of the Churches on the Middle-Class, and (b) to explain why that hold is slackening to-day.

(a) Why has the Church its strongest hold on the Middle-Class ?

The answer is this. The economic characteristics of the Middle-Class are comparative security and prosperity ; and these are the economic characteristics ordinarily essential to the spread and permanence of religious movements.

Dr. George Adam Smith reminds us that this was so in Jewish history.

When did prophecy most flourish in Israel? When had the Spirit of God most freedom in developing the intellectual and moral nature of Israel? Not when the nation was struggling with the conquest and settlement of the land, not when it was engaged with the embarrassments and privations of the Syrian wars; but an Amos, a Hosea, an Isaiah came forth at the end of the long, peaceful, and prosperous reigns of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah. The intellectual strength and liberty of the great Prophet of the Exile, his deep insight into God's purposes and his large view of the future, had not been possible without the security and comparative prosperity of the Jews in Babylon, from among whom he wrote.¹

So with the Christian Faith at the first. From thriving, industrial Galilee Jesus and His first disciples came. "They left all to follow Him, and achieved their ministry in poverty and persecution, but they brought to that ministry the force of minds and bodies trained in a very fertile land and by a prosperous commerce."²

Thorold Rogers has traced the alliance of epochal religious movements with favouring economic conditions.³ The weavers and farmers of Norfolk gave an unsurpassed welcome to Wyclif's teachings; "for a long time a 'weaver' was the familiar synonym for a heretic." The Renaissance trained the heralds of the Reformation, which drew its strength from the great commercial cities of Northern Europe. Prosperous East Anglia was the backbone of the Puritan cause. Dr. Rigg pointed out that the itineraries of Wesley and his helpers were practically confined to industrial England,⁴ which during the middle of the eighteenth century experienced expanding trade and consequent "good times."

The same phenomena exist to-day, and further

¹ *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii., p. 424.

² *Ibid.*, p. 425. Also see *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 462-3, by the same author.

³ *The Economic Interpretation of History*, pp. 81-91.

⁴ *The Living Wesley*, pp. 153-154.

illustrate the reason for the alienation of the poor from the Church. Where economic security is most nearly attained there Church-going and other expressions of religious conviction are most general. Where economic insecurity prevails there organised Christianity is weakest.

Life scarce can tread majestically
Foul court and fever-stricken alley.

“Have we not yet to learn from the Hebrew prophets that some amount of freedom in a people and some amount of health are indispensable to a revival of religion? Lives which are strained and starved, lives which are passed in rank discomfort and under grinding poverty, without the possibility of the independence of the individual or of the sacredness of the home, cannot be religious except in the most rudimentary sense of the word. For the revival of energetic religion among such lives we must wait for a better distribution, not of wealth, but of the bare means of comfort, leisure, and security.”¹

(b) Why is the hold of the Church on the Middle-Class slackening?

On the economic side four reasons suggest themselves.

First, life grows harder for many “middle-class” men. The pace of life under the competitive system kills. Long hours at business, anxiety to get and keep customers, the unrelenting fight to avert loss or increase gain, wear men out before their time. Sunday comes: an extra hour in bed, a quiet spell in the garden, a stroll or cycle-run, a chat at home or a trip to see one’s friends, are alternatives to Church-going. Jaded, mentally and physically, men let weariness dictate their course. Here is one cause for the dwindling attendance at morning worship.

Secondly, Sunday labour is increasing, particularly

¹ G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, pp. 426-7.

in the industries dependent on facilities for travel. Bus, tram, and railway employees may get one Sunday off in two, three, or only six. Refreshment-house keepers and their staffs find Sundays grow busier. The Labour demand for one day's rest in seven will certainly receive the support of the Churches. Experience in tracing absentees from a Brotherhood will show, to any Church-worker, how large is the area of life now invaded by Sunday toil.

Thirdly, is it not time to recognise that Church calls for money may become too frequent and insistent ? There are times in many a middle-class family when an inelastic income has to meet increasing expenditure. To give the children a good start, to meet the expense of illness, or to turn an awkward corner in business—such a contingency may mean that a man has a hard struggle to get along at all. Extravagance in personal habits allied with meanness in response to Church appeals is indefensible ; but meagreness of income may be the lot of the most generous-hearted. Unable to respond as before to all the claims of his Church, the man passively resists ; he, and his family, are less regular in Church-attendance, less intimately concerned with her enterprises. ' It is not a very heroic attitude, perhaps, yet sometimes suggested by diffidence or sheer necessity. Need religious worship be so costly ? Simplicity in architecture, and avoidance of the denominational rivalries which lead to the erection of unnecessary churches, would save financial strain in certain quarters.

Fourthly, the call to social service and reconstruction has depleted the Churches of some who should have been their " best workers." This is a needless and lamentable loss. Religion, pure and undefiled, stirs social sympathy, kindles the protest against tyranny. A true religious revival always issues in a social crusade. Wyclif's " poor priests " fanned the English Peasant Rising of 1381 ; Puritanism fought for Eng-

land's political liberties ; the Methodist Movement, and the humanitarianism which went with it and after it, were cause and effect. The Social Call of this generation was answered by men and women, some of whom found their local Churches unconcerned about the wrongs done to the poor, and hostile to agitations for redress of Labour's grievances. Religion carried these earnest spirits into works of practical philanthropy, or into the Labour and Socialist campaigns ; the unsympathetic mood of their Churches weakened and finally broke the link that held them to organised Christianity. What matters more than the number of those thus lost to the Church is their quality ; they are the stock of which the better world is born.

3. *Non-Church-going and the Rich*

The rich are a very small fraction of the community. Mr. Money's estimate was that in 1908 those whose income exceeded £700 numbered, with their families, 1,400,000, that is less than 4 per cent. of the nation.

The Free Churches, the Roman Catholics, and the Jews have a sprinkling of wealthy adherents, but it will not be seriously contested that a larger proportion of the rich is attached, actually or nominally, to the Church of England than to any other communion.

There are factors which make it difficult to pronounce categorically whether or not Church-going maintains its hold on the well-to-do. Wealth means ability to travel. The less itinerant sections of the nation cannot escape scrutiny, but the vagrancy of the rich partially secludes them from the critic. Further, while modern literature abounds in studies of poverty by observers skilled and unskilled, studies of wealth, of sociological worth, are few. Still we are not without data, and the way to certain conclusions is fairly clear.

(a) Riches do not *necessarily* mean irreligiousness.

The camel may go through the needle's eye. Every denomination has its record of men who have risen superior to the temptations of money, and in breadth and depth of character, and in free-hearted support of Church work, have been fine types of Christian manhood. There is heroism among the very rich as among the very poor; the conquest of circumstance is always noble. It is not among such as these that declension from Christian worship is found.

(b) It is among the non-serious rich that Church-going has declined. The Broadening of Life has reacted on their habits.

The motor-car, the steam-yacht, and express-services on land and sea, have rudely disturbed the worshipping customs of the last generation. The rich can range the world at ease. But irresponsible power is perilous. Life divorced from the discipline of healthful work may become a thing of shame. There is a passage in Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* which puts this more tellingly than many words:

The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. I amused myself with being a *flâneur*, a dandy, a man of fashion. . . . I became the spendthrift of my own genius, and to waste an eternal youth gave me a curious joy. Tired of being on the heights, I deliberately went to the depths in the search for new sensation. . . . I grew careless of the lives of others. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber one has someday to cry aloud on the housetop. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace.¹

There is another type of rich man, the most familiar to plain folk to-day. This is the man who "made" his money by speculation or by advertising common

¹ Pp. 22-3.

things uncommonly. Cash carries him and his family into Society's upper circle. Whether they are Church-goers or not depends on convention not conviction; "good form" rather than goodness settles Church-attendance or abstention. They inhabit a hollow world, resplendent in outward gaiety, reckless in pursuit of pleasure, devoid of serious aim. The Cross is set in diamonds; how can it save?

The great fall in attendance at London Anglican Churches between 1886 and 1902-3 was very marked in the richer boroughs. "Week-ending" is of course one explanation, and raises the question, Does the wealthy "week-ender" go to Church in the country? The Bishop of Norwich, whose position in a diocese constantly invaded by the "week-end party" qualifies him to speak, said in 1910:

Perhaps in Norfolk we have a better opportunity than elsewhere of studying the development of the "week-end party," as it is called. Norfolk leads to nowhere, as you might say. Those who come into the county from, perhaps, London, come to stay in the county for more or less time. It is not a question of making the county "a place of call" as they pass through.

I say without hesitation that the growing practice among wealthy men of coming down into Norfolk from London, bringing with them their guests, and turning the week-end into a time of festivity, is having an injurious effect on the community. . . .

They have turned the estates into shooting-boxes and the like. . . . Of course, we do not resent their coming; we resent only the fact that they too often turn the Lord's Day into a day of pleasure. We seldom see them at Church service, although we should be only too glad to welcome them. Service at Church is not included in their week-end programme, and that is why the manner of their stay is a drawback to the cause of religion. . . .

There are some who attend service, but the majority come here for another purpose, and therefore set a bad example to the residents.¹

(c) There is a third economic consideration respect-

¹ *The Church and the Life of To-day*, pp. 179-81.

ing superfluous wealth, which affects non-Church-going, and many other matters, at both ends of the social scale.

The very poor are outside the Churches because of their destitution ; their life is too hard and coarse and weary to be good soil for the habit of Christian worship. But this means that the very poor are outside the Churches for the same reason as the very rich, namely, because of the inequitable distribution of wealth. Life is too hard for the needy, too easy for the wealthy ; overtoil is there, the want of honest toil here. This small group of the rich—not 4 per cent. of the nation—draws above one-third of the income of the country.¹ Heap up wealth for the few and there must be scant for the many.

A juster distribution of wealth would banish destitution from the depths of life, and enervating luxury from its surface. The economic balance must be adjusted so that all who are capable of work shall work, and all who work shall earn a sufficiency of means for a wholesome livelihood. This would assure to all a freehold in that sphere where we have seen that response to spiritually enriching opportunities is readiest.

II. THE MORAL ASPECTS OF NON-CHURCH-GOING

The economic and the moral shade into one another. Hence the first illustrations of the moral aspects of non-Church-going will show how bad economic conditions set up bad moral tendencies, and so frame life-habits which estrange many from Church worship.

The other moral aspect of the question concerns the character of the Church-member. Among Church-goers all grades of morality are represented ; Church

¹ L. G. Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty* (tenth edition), p. 48.

doors are open to the worst as to the best : but among Church-members morality should be of the highest grade. Aloofness from the Church is due oftener than some realise to instances of downright inconsistency between Sunday professions and week-day practices. The subject is hackneyed, but unfortunately not outworn.

1. *Poverty and Morality*

It is very significant that Mr. Rowlands' Report on Church-going in Liverpool gives prominence to this issue. He says :

There is a good deal of cheap female labour in the city, partly owing to the lack of factory work such as is found in many Lancashire towns. . . . Recently a branch of the Anti-Sweating League has been established. That there is need for such a step is clear when the facts are known. Full-day café waitresses, working from 8.30 to 8, receive 7/- per week and food. Half-day waitresses, working from 11.30 to 6, receive 4/-. Some customers give "tips," but no reliance can be placed on this. Pantry girls, who have no chance of "tips," receive 4/- to 5/- per week and food.

Shirtmakers get from 1/2 to 3/6 per dozen for making shirts, the lower prices being paid for "slop work," which is of course far more plentiful than good-class work. . . .

Some employers of labour will employ no girls unless they live at home. This is more or less a guarantee of respectability, but it also enables a man to give something less than a living wage. If the temptations to a girl living at home are somewhat less, it is largely because the home is subsidising the employer of labour. When there is added to love of finery and instability of character, the lack of a living wage, it is not surprising that girls sometimes go wrong. A women organiser, recently addressing the local Anti-Sweating League, told how for years she had carried on Sunday-school work, and had been brought into personal contact with girls who had sunk very low. Then she had realised that she must devote herself to the organisation of women's labour in order to make her teaching effective.

It must be remembered also that the lowness of women's wages tends to bring down the level of men's wages, while other causes are working to the same end. The increase of Joint Stock companies, whose first aim is the creation of dividends, tends continually to cut down salaries and wages among men. *The effect of this is to make marriage less easy than in former days.* Is it necessary to emphasise the resultant evils in the morals of the people? ¹

The area of life in which low wages make marriage a ruinous enterprise, and so barricade the way to matrimony, is wider even than Mr. Rowland's comments suggest; for example, shop assistants, a very numerous army, are as a class underpaid. "Living-in" is a burning question in the shop assistants' world. Obviously it means in most cases compulsory celibacy, and, where the "living-in" system obtains, a married man is at a constant disadvantage. This is frankly recognised in an interview with a leading London trader, reported in the *Methodist Times*.²

As to the question of assistants marrying, Mr. P. said that it was his opinion that a married man's chances of getting a berth were decidedly small. "His position, if he is thrown out, is a most perilous one." . . . My manager also pointed out that the profits of this business, from 5 to 8 per cent., would not allow of an increase in the salaries of assistants such as would permit them to get married. Responsible men can be married, mind you!

But the man responsible for the care of a department is not the only one who has human rights and affections. To what unnatural and unnecessary temptations do present-day commercial conditions subject men and women!

The problem, in changing phases, stretches over a vast territory of human experience. Marital considerations apart, perhaps the worst phase is one that

¹ *The Free Churches and the People*, pp. 90-91.

² January 14, 1909.

is seldom considered—the type of life most general in the world of underpaid labour. Low wages are the root cause of the harsh economic environment of millions of workers. Along with low wages, and as their necessary concomitant, goes shortage in some requisites of a healthy life, in house-room, food, clothing, time for rest and for culture of mind and soul. Then, to the older workers there is the haunting dread of unemployment, always near enough to raise the doubt in an incipient rebel as to whether insurrection will pay—better this than nothing at all! Under such relentless pressure life is robbed of quality, and becomes a mere physical struggle to keep living. An order of being prevails from which the spiritual is ousted, or in which it gets but little play and power. Work, which under a true order of life should be a healthful discipline, has become in the modern world a soul-destroying tyranny.

The most ominous consequence is the effect of such life-conditions on the adolescent. Unconsciously they suffer loss of life's great heritage, of the enriching enlargement of mind and soul. Youth developing in such surroundings welcomes Sunday as an escape from the humdrum and the toilsome. Watch the promenade of young life along the favourite thoroughfares of any town on a Sunday evening. Those whom the Church does not grip, for whom her worship is too tame, throng there gayhearted, careless. It is easy to be condemnatory or cynical: they are dressy, superficial, vacuous, and so forth; but if so, why? The life of the weekday holds the secret. Commerce should be the servant of life; modern industrialism has made it the god. We live to make and buy and sell, instead of doing these things as aids to life. In the name of Commerce we sacrifice the mother to the factory, and let the home care for itself. In the name of Commerce we send children to be wage-earners, with a smattering of education, a precocious smartness, as their equipment

for the stern business of purposeful living. In the name of Commerce we condone tricks of trade, and all manner of petty inhumanities, forgetting that tar sticks, and that those whose daily environment is of things and ways tawdry, common and coarse, come to show these attributes in their character.

Kipps of Shalford's Emporium, the creation of Mr. H. G. Wells, is one of the throng, the perplexity of preacher and social toiler.

It is a bright Sunday afternoon . . . Kipps' costume is just as tremendous a "mash" as lies within his means. His collar is so high that it scars his inaggressive jawbone, and his hat has a curly brim, his tie shows taste, his trousers are modestly brilliant, and his boots have light cloth uppers and button at the side. He jabs at the gravel before him with a cheap cane, and glances sideways at Flo Bates, the young lady from the cash desk. She is wearing a brilliant blouse and a gaily trimmed hat. . . .

The conversation is light and gay in the modern style, and Flo keeps on smiling, good temper being her special charm.

"Ye see, you don't mean what *I* mean," he is saying.

"Well, what do *you* mean?"

"Not what you mean!"

"Well, tell me."

"Ah! that's another story."

Mrs. Kipps comes into the pages; not Flo Bates, but Ann of his schooldays. Kipps, who has been "left money," after many ups and downs, emerges as a shopkeeper.

One early-closing evening in July they left the baby to the servant-cousin, and Kipps took Ann for a row on the Hythe canal. . . .

"Artie," said Ann.

He woke up and pulled a stroke. "What?" he said.

"Penny for your thoughts, Artie."

He considered.

"I reely don't think I was thinking of anything," he said at last with a smile. "No."

He still rested on his oars.

"I expect," he said, "I was just thinking what a Rum Go everything is. I expect it was something like that."

It is "a Rum Go." We build up a huge machine for making money, called Commerce. We spend our years in its service, or in a struggle to control its output. Its mighty fabric fills our sky, hiding sun and stars; its noisy clangour drowns the angel-song. Do we wonder that life is unvisited by dreams, and that the soul in man is forgetful of God!

2. Character and Church-Membership

Supremely the Church's need is a loftier standard of character in her members. What is the difference in conduct between a morally-minded man outside the Church and the average Church-member? Is it conspicuously distinguishable; and if so, is the balance invariably in favour of the Church-member? To ask the question is to state the difficulty. We Church people are not good enough. That is certainly one of the causes of non-Church-going. The New Age expects consistency.

True Christianity is inflexibly ethical. It cannot tolerate wrong. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." The Sermon on the Mount fitly stands at the opening of the New Testament, for it strikes the keynote of the Christian Age. Its reiterated, "I say unto you," lifts the Faith high above conventional ideas of morality. Its idealistic demand on the disciples of Jesus, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect,"¹ is interpreted in moral terms; they are perfect who, pure of heart, antagonise hatred, lust, lying, resentment to personal affronts, and the spirit of revenge.

Much of modern Christianity conceives of religion in quite another way. To be religious, so the thought runs, is to share in peace-bringing emotions and to enjoy pleasant and respectable companionships; it is to be happy and consciously safe. A perilous way,

¹ Matt. v. 48; summing up the teaching of verses 21-47.

forsooth! Quiescence easily becomes acquiescence, the acceptance of the World instead of ceaseless aggression upon it. Suddenly there comes some lapse in personal character—drunkenness, embezzlement, immorality. For a while the local Church is shocked out of somnolence; then failing to see why a saint has turned sinner slowly sinks back into the sleep of self-content. To the scornful eye of the outsider it is a company of

Church-goers . . . in daily life
Showing as little actual comprehension
Of Christian charity and love and duty
As if the Sermon on the Mount had been
Outdated like a last year's almanac.

Dr. Fairbairn's phrase concerning Calvin is worthy of re-emphasis; he "was resolved, so far as he had power, to make the Church what it had not been but what it ought to be, *an institution organised for the creation of a moral mankind.*" This means that there should be no truce between Church and World. A Christian, as a Christian, is committed to unremitting war with wrong. When membership of the Church implies, and requires, unselfishness among one's family and friends, integrity in commerce, passionate love of justice in private and public affairs, and self-forgetfulness in Church duties, then men outside the Church will see a valid reason for Church-going.

III. THE INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS OF NON-CHURCH-GOING

The theological unrest, which culminated in the "New Theology" controversy of 1906-7, is a factor to be seriously estimated in examining the causes of non-Church-going. The man in the pew, or the man who should be in the pew, knows something, and in some cases a good deal, of the changes in the theological outlook. The Press tells him what the pulpit

often ignores. Anyone who thinks and reads is aware that theology is in transition. Such a man knows that the Bible is not regarded with childlike credence; questions of lower and higher stages in its moral teachings, of the inerrancy of its narratives, of the relation of Israelitish customs and beliefs to those of other nations of antiquity, meet him in the newspaper, the magazine, the volume of essays. He knows, too, that the attitude of the student to the enigmas of the Hereafter differs widely from that characteristic of the preaching of his childhood's days.

How such changes affect him depends very much on the ministry under which he worships or used to worship. Granted that a preacher's task to-day is hard, that to resolve the difficulties of the perplexed may be to create difficulties for the hitherto confident, there are none the less open to him opportunities, in the pulpit and out of it, of priceless value. In the pulpit the posture of the mind counts for more, with the regular hearer, than an occasional unbalanced freedom of speech; a congregation soon knows whether its minister habitually "faces the light." Out of the pulpit a watchful man can make his own opportunities to speak with those who, Nicodemus-like, are puzzled by the thought of the New Age and its bearing on accustomed beliefs. The New Testament custom of the Interview is well worth revival to-day; to talk over, with the utmost frankness, man to man, the religious perplexities of the modern mind is a true return to the teaching methods of Jesus.

For want of frankness in explanation individuals here and there drift out of the Church-going habit. It is seldom that Atheism has to be reckoned with in such instances, more frequently it is a reverent agnosticism. "Pronounced Atheism is rare," Mr. Charles Booth reported of London in 1902;¹ the statement

¹ *Life and Labour of the People in London*, vol. on "Religious Influences," p. 424.

would be even more accurate to-day. The position of the men and women indicated is really this : Well-worn pulpit platitudes have ceased to impress them ; they want to know what, in the flux of thought, will abide of permanent moral and spiritual worth. Reticence on their part—Nicodemus is slow to speak—or poverty of insight, sympathy or knowledge on the part of a minister, widens the breach. Those whom the Church so loses may be few numerically, but their quality is a loss the Church ought not to sustain. The independent thinker, like the social idealist, is indispensable to any movement which seeks to win the assent of men ; least of all is he dispensable to the Church which claims Humanity for her kingdom.

A closely related subject is the failure of many Church services to satisfy the needs of thoughtful hearers. Here it is better that the hearer, the layman, should be heard.

Sir Oliver Lodge discusses the Church of England order of service in these terms.

The feeling with which some go away from an average place of worship is too often a feeling of irritation and regret for wasted time.

I have known men of energy supply the needed intellectual exercise, and contrive to stimulate their historic sense, by using a Latin Prayer Book and a Greek Testament ; and something of the sort is sorely needed if one is to attempt to keep one's attention fixed on the ancient formularies, so familiar from childhood, and recited or chanted in so meaningless a manner.

The greater number of men, I believe, cultivate the habit of inattention during the great part of the proceedings ; and it is possible, though less easy, to preserve an attitude of mental inattention even when reciting formularies with the lips. . . . The fact is, the conventional English Church service, or eclectic admixture of combined services, is too long, and, as I think, too mechanical. . . .

But at least the sermon is free. So let preachers realise their opportunities and make use of them, and let them no longer throw away their chance of moving the hearts of men towards a higher and more useful and

unselfish life, by over-attention to the conventional arrangement called the Church's Year. The annual commemoration of everything is often made an excuse for laziness; it saves the trouble of choosing a subject. It provides a hackneyed theme ready to hand, to be treated in a conventional and hackneyed manner. Silently and patiently the people sit there and are not fed.

Religion is one thing; Church services as often conducted are quite another thing. . . . It is not religion to which people are indifferent.¹

Mr. W. Forbes Gray, writing with a wider reference on preaching generally, says:

Educated men who take the trouble to think find much of the preaching of the present day intellectually unsatisfying. It is shallow and dogmatic, and merely appeals to the emotions. Moreover, it does not keep abreast of the times either in its message or the mode in which it is expressed. . . . Christianity is not interpreted in the light of advancing knowledge. . . .

Ministers ought to be intellectual as well as spiritual leaders. They owe it to themselves, to the cause of Christian truth, and to those who listen to them. Given a higher standard of intellectual efficiency and honesty in the pulpit, one serious cause of non-Church-going among the cultured would be materially lessened.²

Without regarding the foregoing criticisms as a general indictment of preachers and preaching, the frank speech of the essayists lays emphasis on an aspect of the problem perilous to neglect.

¹ *Non-Church-going, Its Reasons and Remedies*, pp. 122-26.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.

CHAPTER IV

NON-CHURCH-GOING ; ONE WAY OF REMEDY

It is surely remarkable that of the fourteen contributors to the recent valuable volume on *Non-Church-going, Its Reasons and Remedies*, none referred to the opportunity, actually in the Church's hands, of training a new race of Church-goers in her Sunday schools. The obvious is the easily forgotten. Yet here is a chance to regain lost territory, a chance for which the Church need not wait a day.

Social reconstruction will strike at the root of spiritual apathy amongst the very poor, but the campaign for social redress is long and sorely contested ; vested interests drawing wealth from the degradation of the people fight with fury against far-reaching reforms ; the brewers' rampage against the Licensing Bill will not soon be forgotten. The old and mischievous tradition of ecclesiastical contempt for Democracy can be effaced if the Church preaches justice and fraternity, and so shapes her corporate life as truly to express these cardinal doctrines. Both these tasks are essential ; but progress here, if whole-hearted answer is made to the call of duty, will be steady rather than swift.

With the children the case is different. The Church can strike now, and *with immediate effect*. Lord Salisbury once counselled publicists to study foreign politics "in large maps" ; the Church might well con the problem of her home base in similar fashion. In Church of England Sunday schools there were, in

1909-10, 2,518,918 scholars ; in the Sunday schools of the eight largest Free Church denominations, in 1910-11, 3,289,911 scholars ; a total of 5,808,829. Two-thirds of these, at least, would be of seven years of age and upwards, that is, they are old enough to be attendants at morning worship at least. How many do attend ? In how many denominations are the scholars being educated to value public worship, and to anticipate entrance upon membership of the Church ? If, in days of over-organisation, another League could justify itself, the League of Worshipping Children, projected by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, would have first claim.¹

The children of the Sunday schools should be trained to become regular attendants at Church worship. Probably this is being done to a larger extent and with greater effect in the Church of England than in the Free Churches. It is difficult to decide whether the Anglican Church resists modern disintegrating influences more successfully than the Free Churches ; in some respects that seems probable. If that be so, it may well prove that her more stable position is due to the existence of a closer link between Sunday school and Church. Certainly in many parishes the habit of Church-going is inculcated with great definiteness.

The training of the children as a new race of Church-goers, let it be repeated, can be begun at once ; but it must be *training* ; simply to pass a resolution that scholars shall attend public worship will not carry us far. It is needful (1) to get at the facts, (2) to make the Church service at some point directly interesting and appealing to child-worshippers, (3) to consider afresh the relation of the Sunday school to the Church, and (4) to keep steadily in view the social dilemmas and distresses which deteriorate child-character, and hinder children from coming to school or church.

¹ *For the Church* (A Pamphlet).

I. GETTING AT THE FACTS

The first step is plain. Supposing the minimum age at which the Church wishes to secure attendance is seven. Let the Church- or non-Church-going custom of every child on the Sunday-school registers, from seven years of age and upwards, be discovered by inquiry; the Sunday-school teachers can do this best, in their classes or by visitation.

An investigation at St. Paul's United Free Church, Edinburgh, in 1908, elicited these results:

Ages.	Number Investigated.	Regularly.	Attending Church Irregularly.	Never.
7-10	91	24	29	38
10-15	130	58	45	27

"Combining the two groups of ages, out of 221 scholars 82 attended regularly, 74 irregularly, and 65 not at all."¹

It would be a great advantage to have similar counts made in different parts of the country, and in schools of all denominations. It is safe to forecast that there would be disclosed one fruitful cause of non-Church-going; to neglect the children is to assure a race of non-Church-goers.

The second step naturally follows: If the children do not attend Church, where are they and what are they doing in Church hours? This should be discovered. Answers will vary. Some girls are "helping mother," some boys delivering newspapers, milk, etc. The "clothes question" is painfully pressing where the father is out of work or on "short time," and in the crowded poverty-areas the economic aspects of non-Church-going affect the child more tragically than

¹ Letter in *British Weekly*, May 11, 1911.

the adult. All this is baffling, and emphasises the point that the social problem and abstention from Christian worship are more closely linked than many care to admit.

Another group of reasons leads to ground which offers more immediate hope. There are parents who think the children are not wanted at Church. There are homes—who shall number them?—where late-rising is the Sunday habit, and the children therefore unready at worship-hour. There are children who shy at church though they love school. Here invitation and explanation will certainly meet with some success. This leads to another consideration. If a *habit* of church-going is to be formed, if the children themselves are to like to come to church, there must be features in the service which will win and help and hold them.

We therefore pass on to

II. THE CHILDREN'S SHARE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

A *separate* children's service is ordinarily a mistake. It fails just where we want to succeed ; it does not accustom the children to join the central worshipping congregation ; their worship is apart from the worship of the Church. The children who swarm in slumdom's streets are admittedly a special case, and distinctive provision is necessary for them ; with that exception, the child's worship should be with the adult. The ideal is the family group, parents and children worshipping side by side. If that is impossible the children should sit, under due oversight, where they can see the preacher and he can easily address them. Order is essential. The child readily responds to the call for reverence, but reverence is impossible in disorder.

The guiding principle should be that it is necessary to a complete religious training that a child should attend church once a Sunday. Usually it is not well

to urge more than this, for most children are Sunday-school scholars, and one service at church additional to Sunday-school attendance is sufficient. As the younger children will generally attend the morning service, that is marked out as the one in which the children should share. A children's hymn, a children's address, and a brief prayer which the children can understand—or, better still, in which they are encouraged to repeat the simple phrases after the minister—meets their need. Then, excepting those remaining in adult care, the younger children should not be required to remain during the sermon. The sermon to be of service to the adult will be beyond the child's grasp. To weary a child by insistence on sitting quietly for half an hour with nothing to interest, nothing to do, is to court restiveness and breed dislike for church-going.

III. THE RELATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH

This relationship requires reconsideration to-day. In not a few districts the custom has grown up of regarding Sunday-school and Church as separate entities, instead of the one as the training-ground for the other. Both suffer. The school loses the whole-hearted sympathy and support of the Church; the Church loses the continual refreshment of young life, with its buoyancy and enthusiasm.

It is essential that this severance should end. In the public business of education the object is not to impart just so much information, but rather to exercise and direct the faculties of the children, that they may bring in due time a useful contribution to the commonwealth. So in the high affair of religious education: the teacher's object should not be simply to explain an appointed Bible passage, but to win the scholars for Christ and the Christian

fellowship that they may enter its holy brotherhood as fruitful members. The day school trains the child for citizenship ; the Sunday school should train the child for Churchmanship. This is synthesis, not anti-synthesis. True Churchmanship is remote from bigotry and the spirit of caste ; it is instinct with passion for God and man ; it is impregnate with loyalty to the Threefold Witness of righteousness, love, and redemption. Hence to train the child for Churchmanship, rightly conceived, is also to base citizenship on character, to teach the child to accept a citizen's duties as a joy and not a burden, and to instil the primal truth that to love God greatly is to serve man gladly.

Now, if it be accepted that Sunday-school and Church are integrally one, that the school is not an adjunct but the nursery of the Church, it follows that the school should receive the best the Church can give in premises and teaching apparatus, in teaching staff and ministerial oversight. It would be a divergence from the main argument of this book to enter upon a description of the new educational methods which, happily, are rapidly gaining ground in the Sunday-school world. Nor is this necessary ; a considerable expository literature has already grown up.¹ The system of "grading" the school, resting as it does on the sure deductions of child-psychology, has come to stay. It brings with it requirements which the Church must meet : the claims of the schools will be for *matériel*, buildings adapted and furnished suitably for "graded" work ; for *personnel*, teachers able and willing, ministers whose sympathy, knowledge, and help will be freely placed at the service of the movement towards Sunday-school reorganisation. The movement has begun ; the wisdom of the Church will be to speed its advance.

¹ An admirably lucid statement of the case for Sunday-school reorganisation is *The Church and the Next Generation*, by Richard Roberts (James Clarke). *The Growing Generation*, by Barclay Baron, is a very useful study of the life of working boys and girls (Student Christian Movement).

The other end of the present problem has scarcely been touched in some denominations: how is the school to replenish the ranks of the Church?

The Anglican Church has her rite of Confirmation; the parish priest prepares the "children being now come to the years of discretion," who in Confirmation "renew the solemn promise and vow" made in their name at Baptism. In the Society of Friends the children of members are recognised as members of the Society from birth. Among Calvinistic Methodists "the children of members are definitely recognised by the Church as possible and prospective members. Their names are entered in the Church Manual, and a record is kept of those who enter into full membership each year." In the other Free Churches, which number three million children in their Sunday schools, there is wanting a general and sustained attempt to associate religious decision with the crisis of adolescence.

Adolescence, the period when physical powers and passions are awakening, often witnesses a crisis, it may be a succession of crises, in the spiritual life. The soul becomes self-conscious; to adore, to emulate, to sacrifice are its nobler moods; to doubt, disobey, defy, are its wilder impulses. No summons of the New Age is more vital than that the Churches, duly regarding the teachings of psychology, should devise or develop methods of securing the adherence of youth to Christ and the Christian community.

The annual "Decision Day" might be made the central occasion of a considered scheme; it is now often worse than a failure. The appeal is general; in its most intimate form it should be restricted to the adolescent, to boys from about thirteen years of age and upwards, to girls from about twelve years of age upwards. The "Day" is isolated; it should, wherever possible, be preceded or succeeded by definite and consecutive instruction, given to senior scholars, in Christian doctrine and in the Christian Way of Life. Some-

times the form of response invited is utterly unsuited to the end in view, and vicious in its after-effects ; to encourage children of all ages to flock into "inquiry-rooms" leads to an exhibition of the habit of acting together less than to the personal act of will, which is the true mark of the beginnings of conscious discipleship. The whole subject of child-conversion and the training of child-converts needs careful review.

One of the findings of the Parliamentary Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, of 1904, exactly expresses the present urgency in respect of the care of childhood.

The Committee are impressed with the conviction that the period of adolescence is responsible for much waste of human material, and for the entrance upon maturity of permanently damaged and ineffective persons of both sexes. The plasticity of the physical organisation, the power it possesses of yielding rapidly towards degenerative or recuperative influences, appears to terminate at eighteen, and the records of the years preceding that age are in the great majority of cases decisive for self-improvement or the reverse. Unfortunately, it is a period of which too little account is taken.¹

IV. THE INESCAPABLE SOCIAL QUESTION

There is a black background to the life of the children of the poor to which the Churches have given comparatively little heed. Modern commercialism is destroying the home, and debasing those who ought to be the homemakers.

We see the huge mischief, but see it so often that conscience is dulled to its iniquity. Throughout the day the grimy streets swarm with little mites whose garden is the gutter ; at night with gangs of lads and groups of girls, seeing and knowing the worst of life, when its best should be opening before them. Sunday means a whole day's freedom to be spent according to the devices and desires of their own hearts.

¹ *Report*, pp. 72-73.

The Rev. H. T. Meakin pointed out that the *Daily News* church census accounted for no more than 27 per cent. of the children of school age in Southwark and Bermondsey, and added :

Experience drives me to the conclusion that the vast majority of the 73 per cent. of children in the poorer districts . . . are practically outside the Churches, and have little relationship to them except in an occasional and a charitable sort of way. . . . Any one familiar with the slums will know that at the hour when Sunday schools are being held, the streets, courts, and alleys are alive with youngsters to whom Sunday makes no difference in clothing or cleanliness.¹

Plainly the problem is, on the one side, social, since it touches the development of education and the re-organisation of industry ; on the other, moral, for it involves new and bold experiments in ethical and religious training and oversight. The situation is a challenge to State and Church.

(a) The duty of the State.

No thoughtful citizen will deny that here is the real danger-zone, the gravest menace to the State. Cradled in need, brought up amidst the stint and squalor of the slum, untrained for the toil of the skilful, with no hope of brighter fortune save as the spoil of crime or the luck of the gambler, ready for a row in the alley or a raid on the city—such are they who dwell in the Underworld. Quiet folk forget them until in times of stress or want the Underworld breaks loose. The riots which accompanied the great Cardiff and Liverpool strikes of 1911 are a case in point. The strike-leaders counselled order ; the strikers, in the main, kept the peace ; but the uncontrollable element from the back streets was beyond the power of the Trade Unionists, and almost of the police, to hold in check. Into our twentieth-century speech the word *hooligan* has come to designate the typical human growth of the

¹ *The Religious Life of London*, p. 326.

slum ; England does not yet realise that the hooligan is not a stray freak of nature, but the product of gross and horrible social conditions into which tens of thousands of children are born every year, among which they cannot but grow up into a deformed manhood or womanhood.

Reform must centre on the child. The lines of necessary and possible social advance are many. Every claim asserted in the first section of the Charter of Democracy—the winning of a Minimum Standard of Life for all¹—bears directly on the issue. The vital consideration is that with the child all things are possible, provided that the chances of betterment are open at the very beginning of life, that they affect life on every side, physical and mental and moral, and are continuous until adolescence is well advanced.

A living wage for the adult stands first, for money is the measure of house-room, food, fuel, clothing, and healthful recreation, and without these, in due proportion, the child must suffer. Medical skill and oversight through the period of expectant motherhood, at birth and during childhood, are essential, and necessitate large extensions of the Public Health Service. The State school is central to any sound scheme of progress ; the school-leaving age should be raised ; the idea of education extended so as to cover a full preparation for the life of a citizen ; the technical and domestic education of boys and girls goes on, in Trade and Continuation schools, when the school-leaving age is passed. The school of the future will be closely linked with the world of industry. Already School-After-Care Committees and the Juvenile Departments of the Board of Trade Labour Exchanges have begun to work hand in hand. Industry must be so reorganised that “blind-alley” occupations, e.g. those of messengers, errand boys, van boys, and street traders, cease to claim lads to use them while their labour is cheap, and then force them

¹ See pp. 117-122.

on the labour market unskilled, undisciplined, and unemployed. Along these lines lies the work of the State.

(b) The duty of the Church.

The Church is compelled to face the world as it is, to do her work here and now. This requires a recognition that present industrial conditions—underpay, overtoil, overcrowding, mischievous incitements to drink, betting, and impurity—have destroyed family life over wide tracts of human experience. Almost all that home means to the sheltered and happy is as surely absent from the lives of the children of the slum as though they were in literal truth homeless. Here is a type: the father, a casual labourer, wages very uncertain; the mother a factory-hand, away the greater part of the day; five children; the “home,” a single room three storeys up. To such children the Church has a double responsibility: first, to form and stimulate public opinion so that no sacrifice shall be held too great that this waste of life may be stayed; secondly, to deal with the homeless children *as they are*, and provide for them, as far as possible, the home-life they lack.

In this second task bold experiment is necessary. Every denomination is faced by the difficulty of “the down-town church,” once flourishing, now in decay. The former worshippers have gone to the suburbs; the church is hemmed in by tenements of poverty. The general alienation of the very poor from Christian worship is demonstrated by the few who come in from the crowded streets to the almost empty church. Around the gates the little children swarm; in the evening, throngs of hoydenish lads and girls pass and repass its doors. Why not turn the “down-town” failure into a House of Hope?

Tilda of No. 5 John Street says to the Princess, “Don’t give no more dinners to us grown-ups. We’re done. But make a lor about the young ’uns. Them’s

your chance." There is a pathetic wisdom in the words of 'Tilda which the Church should mark. It is madness to wait while legislators wrestle with slum-lords and master-sweaters, with brewery-shareholders hungry for dividends and with bookmakers for spoil. The children are growing old in evil. The Church must save now. Why not turn the deserted "down-town" sanctuary into a great home for the youth of the streets? Let the Sunday services be their services, the vestries their week-night club-rooms. Boys' clubs and girls' clubs, guilds of play, and circles of Christian fellowship would make it night by night the centre of a wholesome and redemptive life. A well-devised, well-supported, efficiently-staffed enterprise of this order might impress a new morality upon a neighbourhood.

CHAPTER V

FISSURES AND FLAWS IN THE CHURCH

IN this chapter are grouped together certain disqualifications which seriously limit the power of the Church as a whole to grapple effectively with the problems of the New Age.

The first is Disunity, seen in divisions between the Churches.

The second is a low level of spiritual experience, of which the indications are many: amongst them are the spirit of strife, apathy in respect of social injustice, restiveness under the call for real sacrifices, and the pettiness which dwarfs the conception of the Church until men become content to ignore the World-Need so long as they themselves can worship in peace and amidst the tokens of respectability.

The third attaches to the Ministry. The mark of a true Christian Ministry is leadership in goodness, in moral thinking, and in self-sacrificing labour. The measure of ministerial deficiency in this threefold leadership is the degree to which the Church forfeits authority in bearing her due Prophetic, Healing, and Saving Witness.

As the first of these disqualifications touches a topic of controversial and perennial interest, the nature of the Church, it is important to delimit the discussion. In this chapter, then, this question and the others discussed are regarded solely from the point of view of the New Age; that is to say, we ask how do these fissures

and flaws in the Church hinder her from rendering a complete service to Christ and Humanity. We survey the loss the Church sustains through Disunity, through a low level of spiritual experience, and through the lack of leadership at once clean and courageous. The standpoint is practical not polemical. Time may show that it is along the line of giving answer to pressing human needs, that ecclesiastical controversies will find solution; working side by side, men may come to see more nearly eye to eye.

I. DISUNITY

The Church of Christ should present the commanding example of unity. Love is the badge of Christian discipleship: "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹ Jesus acknowledged more than one fold, but as He was the one Shepherd so, He declared, His sheep should be one flock, however infolded:² "that they may all be one" was His yearning to the end.³ Unity was an apostolic watchword to the primitive Churches.⁴

1. *As Things are in England*

Unity was a note of the Church at the first: Disunity reigns to-day. Around the very word "church," surely meant for a symbol of brotherhood, controversy rages. All shades of meaning attach to it, from the simple Pauline phrase, "All that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place,"⁵ to a Sacramental signification involving Apostolic Succession and a grace of Orders. Controversy may seem to slumber, but let any moot point, cognate to the issue, be touched—Disestablishment, denominational interests in education, inter-communion—and the

¹ John xiii. 35.

² John x. 16.

³ John xvii. 20-21.

⁴ E.g. Phil. ii. 2-4; Eph. iv. 3.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 2.

combatants rush to arms. Even when and where there is no open dispute, long and embittering experience consciously parts those who worship "one Lord, Jesus Christ."

The position existing in a Southern English town may be usefully outlined. Organised Christianity is, broadly speaking, parted into three camps. There are the Roman Catholics, having no manner of Christian fellowship with the members of other Christian bodies. There are the Free Church denominations, Presbyterian, Independent, and Methodist, federated in the Free Church Council, uniting occasionally in the Communion Service, in meetings for prayer, and in exchange of pulpits: these expressions of fellowship are of recent development, and due chiefly to the initiative of the Free Church Council; yet the preceding era of rivalry is not quite forgotten, its most manifest token being the existence of unnecessary places of worship erected years ago to secure to the several denominations footing in the growing township. Between the Roman Catholics on the one hand and the Free Churches on the other is the Church of England, claiming primacy on all representative occasions as the Established Church of the nation: the Church of Rome repudiates her Orders; she herself persistently withholds the title of "Church" from the Nonconforming denominations which together equal at least half the numerical strength of the town's organised Christianity. The annual town's meeting on behalf of the Bible Society is the only occasion on which Anglicans and Free Churches regularly unite for a religious purpose; and in recent years it has become more difficult to secure the co-operation of Anglican clergy for this object, for the feeling aroused by the Education Act of 1902 and the Education Bills of 1906 and 1908 was bitter and abides. That is the position in one town, and, subject to local modifications, it not unfairly represents the general English situation.

One feature not to be overlooked is that denominationalism shows signs of decay. The separatist traditions of the past are treasured in ecclesiastical circles, but among the rank and file, present need and liking usually count for more. The issues which sharply parted our forefathers are half-forgotten. This is chiefly true in the Free Churches. A preacher's personality, his outlook and the notes of emphasis in his message, the ties of family and of friendship, locality of residence, opportunity for Church work: these are among the considerations which go to decide the modern man's place of Christian worship. Also a sense of the loss involved in denominational effort weighs heavily with some thoughtful workers in the Churches. This is a point of importance, and claims examination.

2. *Loss through Disunity*

Such men feel keenly that Disunity gravely subtracts from the impressiveness and worth of the Church's Witness. That Witness, to possess its full legitimate influence, should be the voice of an undivided Christianity, not of a fragment of the whole. In face of the Social Uprising and the Foreign Call, the Church ought to speak as one. The moral claims of the New Age should submerge ecclesiastical animosities. The time and thought spent in controversy are wanted for constructive work in the City of God. The way to Disunity has been long, dreary and disastrous; it is time to seek the way to Unity, however difficult it may be to find or hard to travel.

(a) Effectiveness in the work at home requires this.

Without spending time on restating the case for Christian social service, for a wiser use of the Church's resources, and, beyond all, for a return to the passion and extremism of the apostolic pioneers, note how wasteful are the competitive methods of denominationalism.

In old towns which are stagnant or declining, and in the older quarters of growing towns, one kind of wastage is seen. There stand places of worship, once thriving, now thinly attended, amidst steadily diminishing populations. Denominational loyalty or pride sustains them by continual sacrifice: but sentiment apart, certain of them represent men and money locked up in unproductive undertakings. Another kind of wastage is seen in new towns, and in the new suburbs of old towns, where each denomination strains its hardest to establish a "cause." The newly erected places of worship appear to the incoming residents as competitors for their suffrages, each boldly advertising the attractiveness of its services, each burdened with debt in liquidation of which a wearying round of bazaars begins. In such neighbourhoods there is an overplus of Churches, and overlapping in all Church activities.

The most aggressive denomination, however, has limits to its financial powers, and because of this undue strain is unable to respond to calls from other quarters. The national census of 1911 has shown a redistribution of population to be in progress. Huge aggregations of industrial population are coming into being, as, for example, on the South Wales coalfield; the census showed an increase of over a third of a million persons in Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire in the decade 1901-11. There is also a rapid outspreading of the older English towns; the motor-bus, the motor-car, the motor-rail service, and fresh tram routes are fringing the main roads into the country with an urban population, and this process is likely to be accelerated. Unless the Churches can set down buildings and ministers to meet these expanding needs, a proportion of the new generation will grow up with no other knowledge of Christianity than that which the teaching of the Bible in the Council Schools provides. On the present competitive basis an adequate provision is impossible. It may be that in the Churches, as in

commerce, the failure of competition to meet human needs will hasten the coming of some form of co-operation.

(b) The immensity and complexity of the foreign work of the Church is a further reason.

The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 compelled British Christianity to review afresh its obligations. "The field is the world." Only the united action of the Churches will avail to fulfil the World-Will of Christ to-day. The field itself requires the approach of a well-devised Christian strategy. There are vast territories at the heart of Asia and Africa entirely unoccupied by Christian missions; where Christianity is halting Islam is advancing. Under-occupation is the prevalent feature in the cities and provinces of India and China. There are occasional instances of over-occupation, as in parts of South Africa. To utilise the Christian forces efficiently, a common strategy is necessary. The mission field is proving this, disclosing phases of the great enterprise in which joint action is inevitable if the work is to be prosecuted to the fullest advantage: translation, the provision of a Christian literature, education, medical assistance. This pressure of necessity has led missionaries of different Churches farther on the road toward unity than the home Churches have yet advanced. On the foreign field, in some countries, organic Christian unity among Protestant Churches would be speedily realised, but that denominational considerations at home stand in the way.

Not only is the ideal of a united Church taking more and more definite shape and colour in the minds of foreign missionaries at work in non-Christian lands, but it is also beginning, under the influence of the growing national consciousness in some of these countries, to capture the imagination of the indigenous Christian communities, for whom the sense of a common national life and a common Christianity is stronger than the appreciation of differences which had their origin in controversies remote from the

circumstances of the Church in mission lands. The influence of this national feeling is most powerful in China.¹

The 1907 Centenary Missionary Conference at Shanghai, which represented all Protestant Churches at work in China, set on record :

That in planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, we desire to plant *one* Church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the Living God, and led by His guiding Spirit.²

Abroad, as at home, the question ripens. The next requisite to the discussion is a clear idea of the nature of Unity.

3. The Nature of Unity

Unity, like God—Himself One—is a spirit. Unity, like God—Himself Three in One—is manifest in varying forms. It is an underlying principle of common adherence to one life-centre, Christ ; it is a basal belief that, differences of organisation, creed, and custom notwithstanding, all who adhere to Christ must ultimately adhere one to another. Oneness in Him is essential oneness.

To state the meaning of unity thus is to begin at the heart of things, and at the heart of things we must begin. “Efforts at external union are perfectly useless without the spirit of unity,” said Dr. Creighton.

Unity, so defined, is also seen to be distinct from uniformity. Flowers differ in fragrance and colour and in need of sun and rain, yet all are flowers. So with the disciples of Jesus ; differences of insight and outlook are inevitable, but inevitable differences are innocuous and actually enrich discipleship. When the spirit of unity has won its final triumph in the Church,

¹ “Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity” (*Report of Commission of the World Missionary Conference, 1910*), p. 84.

² *Ibid.*, p. 167.

there will still remain differing modes of Church government and administration, as there will certainly remain differences of apprehension of God and His dealings with man. Racial instinct, habit, and history exemplify reasons for abiding though harmless differences; these will not cease to impress the organisation of the Ecclesia. The one Church of Christ in China will indubitably differ in framework from the one Church of Christ in Britain—whenever that arrives—though in spirit they will be the same. Unity and uniformity seldom go hand in hand; but autonomy and loyalty to the one King can easily and naturally do so.

These considerations are the clue to Disunity and to the coming Unity.

Disunity exists to-day where Christians in different denominations magnify their points of disagreement, and minimise those on which they agree. As Father Adderley says:

At present when a Nonconformist meets a Romanist his first thought is not, "Here is a fellow-Christian who with me believes in the Trinity," but, "Here is a man who believes in the Pope and worships the Blessed Virgin." When an Anglican meets a Nonconformist his first thought is, "Here is a man who objects to the Establishment and Church Schools," not "Here is a man who with me wants to make England Christian."¹

The case against denominationalism, *as at present constituted*, is that it favours and stimulates the evil spirit of Disunity. Even so large-hearted an Anglican as Bishop Russell Wakefield illustrates this when, in writing of our "serious points of difference," he says: "The one important principle is that we should each know our position, and that *we should be ready to defend it.*"² That is the vice inherent in denominationalism; at its best, which the Bishop unfailingly

¹ *Church Unity*, pp. 56-57.

² *Ibid.*, p. 41. (The italics are mine.)

represents, a ready posture of defence ; at its worst, unsparing aggression on its rivals. Surely it is of at least equal importance that we should know the position of the men who differ from us and be ready to appreciate that. Eagerness to understand rather than to overthrow, to find a way to the meadows of peace than to the place of duel, is "the one important principle" guiding toward reunion.

The unity to be sought is a unity which comprehends, not excludes. The first requisite is not the impossible one of turning all Free Churchmen into Anglicans, or all Anglicans into Free Churchmen ; but to recognise that adherence to Christ as the life-centre, wherever found, constitutes a basis for Christian unity. "Why," asked Carlyle, "should we misknow one another, fight not against the enemy but against ourselves, from mere difference of uniform ? All uniforms shall be good, so they hold in them true, valiant men." If Carlyle was right, the first condition of unity is not the doffing of diverse uniforms and the donning of one which all must be called to assume. The first condition is the acknowledgment that valiance in Christ's service ranks the fighter as a Christian comrade ; that whatever his uniform, if a man is doing Christ's Will he is not an enemy but a friend. "He that is not against us is for us."

This implies, as Canon Hensley Henson points out, that "the unity of the future will not be the recovery of something that has been lost, but the advance to something that has not yet been gained."¹ If the Spirit of God should lead on the Christian denominations of Britain from a frank recognition of each other's place within the one Church Catholic to an organic expression of that recognition in, let us say, a Federation of the Christian Churches of Britain, the new and visible unity would sum up all the excellencies and emphases of aspects of truth which the federating

¹ *The Road to Unity*, p. 74.

denominations had, in their origins and histories, cherished and elaborated. The Anglican would not surrender his sense of the Church's historic continuity and of the worth of creed and ceremony ; the Presbyterian would retain his faith in a representative system of Church government ; the Independent his assertion of the right of private judgment in matters of conscience ; the Methodist his fervour of testimony to the saving power of God. Unity among the home Churches will not come by a whittling down of, what one may call, the individualities of the denominations so as to reach a "Greatest Common Factor" which all can accept. To attempt that—were it a possible task, which it is not—would be to despoil our present Christian heritage of riches won by much sturdy thinking and battling in past days. The coming unity will include, not exclude. The varying denominational forms of expression of Christian truth appeal to varying temperaments. The New Age needs them all, needs them not as competing but as co-operating and mutually enriching elements. To quote Canon Hensley Henson again :

In our righteous eagerness to find a way of escape from the manifold and manifest mischiefs of existing Denominationalism, let us not forget that the denomination, like episcopacy, the mediæval papacy, and the National Church in earlier times, has formed a necessary link in a providential chain, and has represented an indispensable phase of an advancing process. The better state to which we now aspire must, if it is to merit that description, include the distinctive gains of Denominationalism, viz. liberty, for the individual conscience, and variety of ecclesiastical system corresponding with the variety of human life. There can be no going back to the earlier and outgrown phases of Christian experiences.¹

4. The Way to Unity

In all that has preceded, no direct reference has been made to the parting lines between the denominations,

¹ *The Road to Unity*, pp. 73-74.

or to the greatest fissure of all, that between the Sacerdotalist and Evangelical schools of thought. The point of view taken has not necessitated such discussion ; but in considering the way to unity it is now needful to say that the surest path to a unity, spiritual and comprehensive, will be by friendly, free-hearted conference, by co-operation in moral crusades, and by prayer.

(a) Conference.

The mediæval custom of public disputations concerning Christian doctrine is of small service to-day, even though the controversy has been transferred from platform to Press. If all over the country, during the next decade, small unofficial companies of clergy and ministers of all denominations met from time to time, to talk over freely their common loyalty to Christ and what it implies, and of their differing views of Christian doctrine, the gain might be immeasurable. Denominational leaders would come to see each other's standpoint. There would filter through the Churches a new spirit of tolerance and goodwill. The gulf between Anglican and Free Churchman would be spanned, just as the old misunderstandings between the Free Churches are waning as their ministers and members meet in the fellowships of the Free Church Council and of other uniting agencies.

(b) Co-operation in moral crusades.

There is progress along this line at a rapid pace. The various denominational Social Service Unions are leading the way. A "Conference of Social Service Unions" is in existence, which periodically brings together social workers of the Roman, Anglican, and Free Church communions.¹

The advance of Socialism makes for the same end.

¹ A United Summer School for the study of social problems meets in 1912. The co-operating bodies are the Catholic Social Guild, the Christian Social Union (Church of England), the Presbyterian Social Union, the Congregational Union of England and

"It is creating personal friendship between most unlikely men," writes the Vicar of St. Mark's, Leicester; "it is breaking down old divisions, creating cross-currents, and rehabilitating social hopes. Men are finding in it a centripetal force, and no men more than the clergy and the Free Church ministers. This is bound to issue in fundamental changes in Church and State, and the whole trend of it is to unity and the corporate life in the social and ecclesiastical organism."¹

(c) Prayer.

It is significant that the yearning of Jesus, "That they all may be one," is enshrined in prayer. As conferences between clergy and ministers, and inter-denominational assemblies for social study, are associated with prayer; as the trend toward union already noted in the foreign missionary enterprise leads to prayer for the one Church Catholic; as the custom of prayer for the members and labours of all Christian communions becomes general in each communion, so the way will be disclosed for Christ's disciples to tread "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith."

5. *The Trend toward Unity*

The spirit of the age favours unity. In industry, unfettered competition is yielding place to the massing of master-producers in the "Trust," and of bodies of consumers in the Co-operative Movement: both methods, antagonistic as they are, probably prepare the way for the absorption of the bulk of industrial activities by a greater unity than either, viz. the State. So in ecclesiastical affairs. A clearer view of the Church's duty and destiny, a sense of the immense and

Wales Social Service Committee, the Friends' Social Union, The Wesleyan Methodist, Primitive Methodist, and United Methodist Unions for Social Service, and the National Conference Union for Social Service (Unitarian).

¹ Rev. F. Lewis Donaldson, M.A.; cited in *Church Unity*, p. 86.

urgent needs of men to whom she is charged to minister, even the reverse in her own fortunes, are forcing home the conviction that strength centres in unity.

The last two decades have witnessed decisive steps. The National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, popularly known as the Free Church Council, which assumed its present form in 1896, has rendered one conspicuous service to British Christianity: it has furnished a platform on which leaders of all the Free Churches could meet, and, setting aside denominationalism, take counsel as fellow-Christians and urge the sovereign claims of Christ their Lord. Actual organic unity has been achieved in two directions. In Scotland the Free Church and the United Presbyterian came together in 1900 to form the United Free Church; in 1907 three bodies of Methodists, the Bible Christians, the Methodist New Connexion, and the United Methodist Free Church merged in the United Methodist Church. In the Colonies the Union movement has travelled faster and farther.

There is no ground for believing that the impulse toward union has ceased. The signs of the times point the other way. Union between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church is a well-worn theme across the Border. A larger union between the Methodists of Great Britain is coming within the sphere of practical politics. Some kind of federation between the Free Churches of England and Wales, closer than the link provided by the Free Church Council, has been recently mooted. How deeply the yearning for unity is felt in some Anglican circles will be seen in the noble passage from the Bampton Lecture of 1907 with which this section closes.

In general, it may be said that throughout the Churches the conviction spreads that disunity leaves the Church enfeebled where she ought to be commanding, and that only as a unity can she make effective answer to the spiritual and social call of the New Age. "Let

us get rid," said the Chancellor l'Hôpital of France during the Wars of Religion, "of these names of party, of faction, and of sedition—Lutheran, Huguenot, Papist; let us keep unadulterated the name of Christian." Sympathy with the spirit of such a saying grows in Britain year by year. It breathes in the consummating sentences of Canon Peile's Lecture :

Let me end, then, by trying to set before you my vision of the days that are coming—a vision which, I trust, is not altogether fancy. I see the rise of a new Religious Order, the greatest that the World has known, drawn from all nations and all classes, and, what seems stranger yet, from all Churches. Its members bear no distinctive habit, no distinctive name, if it be not the humble name of Disciples. Yet they are known to each other, and their knowledge is strength, for they are all the men and women who are not afraid to confess Christ, both with their lips and in their lives. Their Rule is brief and simple; it has but two clauses, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ." Their common Creed is a belief in the Person of Christ and in His power to make men like Him. In their common worship they are united in spirit, though not, it may be, in place and ritual. Each is loyal to the Church which brings his soul nearest to God; yet does not judge his brother who finds another way the best. For they have learned that God, who is one, fulfils Himself in many ways, and that the bond that joins them is stronger than the outward symbols which divide them.¹

II. A LOW LEVEL OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

This disqualification is implied in much that has preceded, and it may seem unnecessary to make express reference to it. Yet here is the root from which all moral disqualifications for Christian service spring, and therefore it is well to set out the indications that, in general, spiritual experience is indifferent in quality.

It is not questioned that the Church still grows saints. That is undeniable. The question is whether

¹ *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 198.

the saint is the rule or the exception ; whether the soil of the Church is so impoverished that much of its yield of character is neither fairer nor finer than that of the open field, the world. The marks of spiritual deterioration can be described in a few words.

1. *Disunity between the Churches*

Differences in judgment respecting Christian truth there will always be, because of elemental differences in temperament, in mental habit, and outlook ; but these should prove helpful not harmful, for by arousing thought they favour the clearer apprehension of truth. The disunity which bespeaks a low level of spiritual experience is that which lays hold of differing judgments, stirs up faction, and parts into hostile camps those who should be good fellow-soldiers of Christ. From this evil spirit "Wars of Religion" ensue ; actual bloody struggles like those in which the spiritual fervour of the Reformation was extinguished, or long-sustained feuds like those which part the Anglican and Free Church communions to-day.

Because it is low tide in the Church's life the waves of controversy break angrily on ancient reef and shoal ; wearily we wait for high tide, the inflooding of the spirit of love, which shall hide fathoms deep the rocks of peril and of doom.

2. *Disunity within the Churches*

On a smaller scale the tragedy of disunion goes forward within the Churches. There is "respect of persons," against which apostolic warnings rang out sharply and sternly ;¹ where power to rule in the Church goes to the moneyed man because of his money, the spirit of Christian brotherhood is affronted, and irreparable mischief done. There is the spirit of

¹ E.g. James ii. 1-9 ; Gal. ii., 6.

caste : where rich hold aloof from poor and poor from rich, where charity is given but comradeship withheld, the Son of God is put to an open shame. There are also family feuds, long-standing grievances which sunder fellow-worshippers into critical and contending groups.

Magnificent instances to the contrary are not lacking, churches in which social distinctions are forgotten, from which the spirit of strife is sedulously excluded, where brotherhood reigns ; but who that knows Church life over a wide area will not sadly admit that in many a local church the tide is at ebb, and freight after freight of good intentions is lost in days of storm on the jagged rocks of anger and of pride.

3. *Apathy in respect of Social Injustice*

Here the case is abundantly proven. The economic wrongs, rooted in the Industrial Revolution, which coarsen and burden the life of the toilers have been discussed ; so also has the twofold attitude of the Church, sympathy and apathy. Among the official element within the Churches there is much apathy toward social wrong ; and not infrequently the lot of a minister, who feeling keenly the injustices done to the poor speaks strongly on their behalf, has been rendered intolerable. The reverse is usually the case among the rank and file of the congregation ; there an interpretation of the Gospel which brings "good tidings to the poor" is welcome.

Wherever apathy toward wrong exists God is dishonoured and man betrayed. "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." For a Christian to withstand the advocacy of social righteousness implies either a faulty knowledge of what his faith requires, or that his faith grips him less surely than do his prejudices or his possessions.

4. *Restiveness under Calls to real Sacrifices*

There are two calls to which contemporary Christianity makes a halting response, the call to direct spiritual service, and the call to direct financial sacrifice.

By direct spiritual service is meant the committal of one's self to the advocacy of Christianity: Sunday-school teaching, lay preaching, spiritual leaderships in the Church, and the personal testimony for Christ which has no rival in effectiveness. Modern Christianity, like modern sport, is suffering from professionalism. The volunteer is failing, the paid agent takes his place. This increases financial strain, it reduces the number of voluntary workers from whom the Church must choose her separated ministry—so leaving a narrower range of choice—and, most serious of all, it deprives her of the convincing Witness of men and women who have nothing to gain, but, it may be, much to lose by a frank confession of Christ.

It is a mark of decadence. Men do not speak readily because they do not believe intensely nor obey sincerely. Unpaid apostleship is waning in the churches.

Further, there is restiveness under the call for direct financial sacrifice. Does any one seriously imagine that the plethora of bazaars is a token of revitalised Christianity? They often involve much waste of time, and divert energies from the prime work of Christian propaganda. It is true that the "Sale of Work" gives to those of small means a chance to offer thought and time, but it is not seriously contended that this is the justification of an endless succession of "Sales." The simple truth is that most Christians are not Christian enough to give regularly and in due proportion to their incomes. Hence the bazaar, to cajole from the public what, in many instances, Churchmen could give if they realised that Christianity claims and expects continual sacrifices.

5. *The Pettiness which limits the Horizon of Christian Duty*

This is the stumbling-block to the Christian pioneer. That the multitudes are without the Church does not burden some who are within. That the world is waking at the touch of a New Age, that this is "the decisive hour in Foreign Missions," fails to impress them. They are well-content. If the preaching of the pulpit says little about economic wrong and social duty, and is not too reminiscent of the moral stress and strife of the weekday, then they are at ease in Zion, and what else matters! What else matters? God matters. Humanity matters. Righteousness matters.

This selfish restriction of horizon is a cardinal hindrance to the spread of the faith.

III. THE PERILS OF THE MINISTRY

A minister who writes on ministerial life must needs wield a wary pen. He has one qualification, knowledge of the inwardness of the ministry. He has one disqualification, the sting of his own shortcoming: "Physician, heal thyself," is the easy answer of the critic.

Yet critic and writer cannot but agree that a statement of the Church's duty in the New Age would be incomplete without reference, however brief and imperfect, to the minister's duty as the leader of the local Church. For on his fitness and fidelity more depends than on any other human consideration. He is to *lead*, and the kind of lead he gives will go far to solve many an open question in the Church's life. He can enkindle, or extinguish, the ardour of sacrifice. He may lead with valiance and resolve, and yet fall short of victory, for there may be failure in the follow-

ing ; but if he fail to lead, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for war ? So all matters touching the ministry hinge on this matter of leadership. The minister is to be the leader of the Church in goodness, in moral thinking, and in sacrificial labour.

1. *Does the Ministry lead in Goodness ?*

Leadership implies conviction, faith. "At all times," says Carlyle, of the Hero as Priest, "a man who will *do* faithfully needs to believe firmly." Leadership in goodness implies faith in God. The minister is to be the great believer. That is the reverse of saying that an ancient creed is to be the final expression of his faith. "No man whatever believes, or can believe, exactly what his grandfather believed," proceed the *Lectures on Heroes* ; "he enlarges somewhat, by fresh discovery, his view of the Universe—which is an *infinite* Universe, and can never be embraced wholly or finally by any view or Theorem in any conceivable enlargement." Beyond all creeds is "one God, the Father" ; and the first claim on the Christian minister is that he shall affirm with true heart, with widening vision, and in consistent practice, I believe in God.

It is of the essence of spiritual leadership that he be able to assert this. If this faith be faint, no diligence in minor things can compensate. Nothing else can keep the man sincere in his office. Its moral dangers are insidious ; but the chief peril is lest he should cease to be a fervent believer, and wither up into an official who preaches, offers prayers, administers holy rites, visits, cares for the business of the Church, but whose soul is in decay. In such case, office comes to be loved more than service ; position in the councils of the Church is aspired after rather than the lonely or perilous post ; the comfortable homes of the well-to-do allure, the

cramped quarters of the needy repel. Against these tendencies the minister must take his stand. His only safeguard is God. To have a changeless sense of a Sovereign Will, a Will to be heeded beyond all other constrainings and to be obeyed at whatever cost—this and this alone can keep a man resolute against the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life. “The curse of our generation” (wrote Kingsley to an Oxford friend) “is that so few of us deeply believe anything. . . . We must pray to God to give us faith ; faith in something—something that we can live for, and would die for. Then we shall be ready and able to do good to our generation. Our fixed ideas will be to us Archimedes’ fulcra in space, whence, if need be, he could move the world. Get hold of some one truth, let it blaze in your sky, like a Greenland sun, never setting day or night. Give your soul up to it ; see it in everything, and everything in it, and the world will call you a bigot and a fanatic, and then wonder a century hence how the bigot and fanatic continued to do so much more than all the sensible folk round him.”

2. *Does the Ministry lead in Moral Thinking ?*

God is the All-surpassing Idealist. Christian idealism is born of faith in God. “Thy Kingdom come” is the prayer of those who say “Our Father.” It was not chance that set the vision of “a new heaven and a new earth” on the closing pages of the Bible : that is the crowning revelation. Reflective, earnest men and women see more and more in the social hope—the Christianising of all human relationships—the ordained work of the New Age.

The idealist is at large. No minister faces a congregation to-day in which there are not some hearts fired by passion for the Holy City. Could he track the steps of some of his hearers through the following week he would see deeds of surprise. Here, in a con-

gregation less likely than many to stir with social sympathies, is an employer of labour voluntarily handicapping himself in the competitive struggle by paying higher wages than his rivals, and at no small cost bettering the work-conditions of his employees beyond Factory Act requirements; here also, sitting near him, is a working-man whose scanty leisure is given to tireless advocacy of Socialism in street and hall. Both men have seen the social vision; both, in varying ways of sacrifice, are obedient to it. Is the man in the pew to outrun the man in the pulpit? Or will he, "this Speaking Man," as Carlyle calls him, make his listeners feel that he, too, is an idealist, a seer as well as a speaker?

This is what men are waiting for: an authentic voice to summon them to what they feel to be the common and urgent duty, to a ministry of justice and fraternity. There is the waking of a social conscience even in the ordinary hearer, and a widening of his outlook on life: it is the preacher who is on trial to-day as to whether he will be a true educator, a leader-out of the faith in righteousness and of the goodwill latent in the soul of the hearer. "If" (as Robert Louis Stevenson wrote), "as teachers, we are to say anything to the purpose, we must say what will remind the pupil of his soul; we must speak that soul's dialect; we must talk of life and conduct as his soul would have him think of them. If, from some conformity between us and the pupil, or perhaps among all men, we do in truth speak in such a dialect and express such views, beyond question we shall touch in him a spring; beyond question he will recognise the dialect as one that he himself has spoken in his better hours; beyond question he will cry, 'I had forgotten, but now I remember. I too have eyes, and I had forgot to use them; I too have a soul of my own, arrogantly upright, and to that I will listen and conform.'"

But will not this social emphasis lead to strife? Inevitably. All anti-social forces will be ranged against a preacher such as this. Opposition will be the proof of his fidelity. Away with the idea that a peaceful ministry is the highest type of a Christian pastorate! The ministry of Jesus was tempestuous. He lived in an atmosphere of plot and malice. All money-lovers, all contemners of the people, hated Him. This, also, is why similes from soldier-life besprinkle the Epistles. The apostles were soldiers of Christ. Their ministry was campaigning. The world was hostile; they dared the world, challenged it, died defying it.

Where the fighting spirit goes out of the preachers Christianity sinks into decay. We are brought back to the point of Kingsley's insistence: "The curse of our generation is that so few of us deeply believe anything." The preacher does not fight, because he has nothing which compels him to fight. He is no idealist. He does not see new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, and so is not at war with Babylon. "Could he but find the point again," as Carlyle would have had him, "take the old spectacles off his nose, and looking up discover, almost in contact with him, what the real *Satanas*, and soul-devouring, world-devouring *Devil*, now is! Original sin and suchlike are bad enough, I doubt not; but distilled gin, dark ignorance, stupidity, dark corn-law, bastille and company, what are they? Will he discover our real Satan, whom he has to fight, or go on droning through his old nose-spectacles about old extinct Satans, and never see the real one till he feel him at his own throat and ours? That is a question for the world."

Turned into the speech of two generations later, this is what Carlyle's strong, rough words mean: sin, nowadays, is some breach of convention, the absence of "good form"; hell is a word to be used with bated breath and in the accent of apology. Will

the "Speaking Man" break with convention and sham, and see the actual hells on earth, the infernos of slumdom where sweated women stitch and slave, the horrors of the Underworld of Britain, its coarsened men and women, its half-starved children, its tempted daughters of poverty,

Whose fingers thin
Push from them faintly want and sin.

Will he tell us that these are spirits in prison, and call us to their emancipation? Will he say with strength that if a man love not his brother whom he has seen he cannot love God whom he has not seen? Will he discover to us roots of social wrong in the underworld of our own lives, in pride and unchaste thinking, in covetousness and uncharity, in severance from the spirit of Jesus?

The idealist has entered Parliament; for the idealist in the pulpit the world is always ready.

3. *Does the Ministry lead in Self-sacrificing Labour?*

The two commonest cynicisms about the Ministry are that ministers are keen on money, and that they take life easily. Slang sums up the satire of the street, and so, unlovely as the phrases are, the biting speech of the man-outside-the-Church is worth setting down. "The parson is on the make," he says; or, "parsons have got a soft job." It is time to ask whether there is any truth in these sayings.

(a) The minister and money.

The economic position of the Christian ministry closely reflects the inequitable parcelling out of wealth in the nation as a whole. There is the same Error in Distribution. A few clergy and ministers are highly paid; more receive a competence; most have hard work to make both ends meet, and where the family is an increasing one, and the meagre stipend

inelastic, there is actual, though often concealed, poverty.

The widely spread idea that the ministry is a lucrative calling appears to be rooted in the memory of the ways and works of the oldtime country parson, whose tithes were the visible token of his comparative affluence, who rode to hounds with the best, and shared with the squire the practical rulership of the parish. It is sustained to-day by belief in the opulence of Bishops; for no explanation of the heavy ecclesiastical charges falling on the episcopate will blot out of the mind of the plain man the fact that the annual income of the Archbishop of Canterbury is £15,000, and that of the Archbishop of York £10,000, or that Bishops live in palaces. It is also sustained by the knowledge that a few well-known Free Church ministers receive considerable salaries.

Put simply, there is a rough justice in the public mind, which sees an incongruity between the relative poverty of the Carpenter of Nazareth with His disciple-band of working-men, and a group of highly paid apostles in twentieth-century Christianity. Injustice is done by the assumption that as are the conspicuous few so are the inconspicuous many. The reverse is true. There are thousands of manses in Britain where a fight, pathetically heroic, against penury goes on year by year.

What ought to be the relation of a Christian minister to money? The answer cannot be in doubt. All Jesus' teaching concerning the perils of wealth touch the apostle of Jesus first of all. He, of all men, should not lay up treasures on earth; his turn of mind should be free from the love of money. Yet this is one of the subtlest of his perils. In the voice that asks, What will ye give me, the spirit of Judas speaks.

On the other hand, the labourer is worthy of his hire. Brain work is best done when the worker can give himself without stint to his thinking. Strength spent

in battling against impending want is force lost from toil for the Church. An age which demands intellect in the pulpit must provide the thinker with the tools he needs, facilities for enriching the mental inheritance of his college days. "Neither poverty nor riches," is the fittest, as it is the Scriptural, economic situation.

(b) The minister and work.

When Mr. Quintin Hogg was asked the first requisite for success in starting a Polytechnic he replied, "Somebody's heart's blood." The minister's giving must be self-giving, his labour sacrificial labour. The mark of the Cross is to be upon it all. This is the price of genuine success. Is it paid?

The careful reader of the life of Jesus cannot but feel that laziness is the unpardonable sin among His apostles. "My meat is to do the Will," said the Master. Kant's categorical imperative was a re-statement of the law of the Lord's life. From the first "I must" of His boyhood¹ to the last progress, when "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,"² duty ruled Him. Whatever measure of truth is in the cynical saying that ministers take life easily it is the saddest and shamefullest criticism that can be passed. To blunders in judgment, and to limitation of gift, all must confess; but for a minister of Christ to be habitually slack in his work is treachery to the Cross. In the two spheres in which ministerial service should be most fruitful, the pulpit and pastoral visitation, not less should suffice than the best and the most a man can achieve. Self-spending is to be the daily practice. The spirit of Jesus hungers to give. Browning's lines,

This life of mine
Must be lived out, and a grave thoroughly earned,

in their grim self-judgment express a point of view which leadership in the Church involves in these days of crisis.

¹ Luke ii. 49.

² Luke ix. 51.

CHAPTER VI

THE VITAL NEEDS OF THE AGE AND OF THE CHURCH

It should be possible in a closing chapter to base on the substance of the preceding chapters an estimate of the vital needs of the New Age, and of the Church ; and also to define, as nearly as may be, the outlook of the Church in these restless and perplexing days.

I. THE VITAL NEEDS OF THE NEW AGE

It is of the first importance to note that the vital needs of the New Age are those which it is the express concern of the Church to supply. Were it necessary to sum up in a single phrase all the aspirations and aims of the contemporary leaders of progress, one would say that their hearts are set on *social reconstruction*. Out of the waste and disorder of our present mode of living they seek to uprear an order of life established on principles of fraternity and justice. They would rebuild society on a moral plan.

Now, according to the work in hand so must the material be ; according to the requirements of the work so the skill of the workers. Here, where the business is the vastest of any, the reshaping of Humanity's complex life on moral principles, the call is for men and women morally minded. A better social unity demands better individuals as its units, while the difficult and long-sustained campaign for social redress

claims that rare type of leader in whom idealism, faith, and tenacity are blended.

The vital needs of the New Age are therefore, first, the multiplication of moral units, of men and women sturdily set on righteousness, on whom the coming social order can be surely based; and, secondly, a moral dynamic which will carry the cause of social reconstruction to its ultimate victory. In so far as the Church supplies these needs, that is in so far as she succeeds in the creation of clean and resolute character, and in the infusion of power to dare and do great things for the commonweal, she truly serves the present age, and her services are of incalculable worth.

1. The First Vital Need of the New Age : Character

An era of reconstruction is necessarily a period of peril. When human affairs are in transition the ancient landmarks may be easily forgotten. This is the present danger. Right ends may be sought by wrong means, as when violence accompanies attempts to obtain industrial redress. Also in the business of reconstruction there may be discarded, unthinkingly, safeguards fashioned to counter grave perils to human society : an outstanding instance is the perilous depreciation of the marriage-tie by some advanced thinkers.

High character, and character of a certain moral quality, is absolutely necessary to the social order which the modern reformer foresees. Each age has required of its most typical sons a distinctive stamp of character. The Puritan Movement bred men of a rugged independence. The Industrial Revolution called to the front "captains of industry," toilsome, thrifty, and enterprising, but imperceptive of the waste of human life entailed by the system under which their fortunes expanded. The Social Uprising makes another call; it needs the altruist, the man who loves the

human comradeship and lives for it whole-heartedly. No type of character is more plainly Christian. The altruist lives not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life. That is to say, altruism is of the nature of Jesus.

Without men and women of this stamp of character the Social Movement will miss its mark. For, consider what is required to assure steady and abiding progress. Among the rich and powerful, willingness to forego superfluous wealth and to accept responsibilities for public welfare; unless there be this spirit in the wealthy they will intrigue to evade the obligations which the State lays upon them, class-bitterness will be consequently accentuated, and the pace of reform will slacken. Among the leaders of thought whose speeches and writings influence the General Mind, fidelity to the cause of social justice is essential, a fidelity which swerves neither to this side at the offer of money or position, nor to that under the subtle influences of daily contact with the unideal and mercenary. Among the rank and file, worn down as they are by privation, and unaccustomed to a life based on economic security, there need a widening sense of the wonder and richness of life, and an intenser conviction that they too are builders of the coming nation; else hard-won gains will be wasted on coarse pleasures, and the sons and daughters of the multitude will find life as sterile and fruitless as did their fathers. The truth is that we are all trustees of the future, whether rich or poor, literate or illiterate, workers in private or in public; and the worth of our stewardship depends on the extent to which we are altruists. To fight for one's own hand, to live first and last for personal pleasure, is anti-social. It is, in reality, the root sin, for at the bottom of social wrongs is this selfishness of individuals. The obverse is also true.* To live for the enrichment of the common lot is social, for it is the outgoing of individual powers to unselfish

ends. It is therefore the root of communal righteousness; the Commonwealth of Humanity will be founded, ultimately, on the altruistic character of its members.

2. *The Second Vital Need of the New Age: A Moral Dynamic*

The leaders of the new Democracy are idealists.

We, sons and daughters of the common people (said Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald), have come to open a new epoch in the history of this country. We are going to smooth out many a wrinkle in the brow of honest men and women; to banish hardship from the life of the child, care for the unemployed, and lead the half-starved, tempted woman to better ways. Also we will stretch out the hand of fraternity to our French and German comrades and to our comrades the world over, and proclaim the day when the sword shall be finally sheathed and the nations pursue the ways of peace.

Ideals so comprehensive involve prodigious labours. Speaking from another point of view, Mr. Balfour, in a reminiscent mood, put this point well.

Mr. Gladstone once told me (he said) that the problems which would have to be solved by my generation were far more intricate and difficult than those that had to be solved by the generation of which he was one of the most distinguished representatives. Mr. Gladstone, I suppose, was about forty years older than myself, and I suppose about the same difference in years separates me from the great bulk of those I now address, and I say to you what Mr. Gladstone said to me. I say to you that the problems which your generation will have to solve are more difficult even than the problems that have fallen for solution to the generation of which I am a member.¹

It cannot but be so. Social thought and action move on from the palliative to the remedial stage. They who drink most deeply of the spirit of this wonderful age know that under the industrial unrest—the

¹ At Lambeth, April 6, 1911.

clamour for higher wage and larger leisure—is a deep-seated revolt against the harsh restrictions of poverty and a yearning for a finer and a fuller life.

What the New Age needs to transmute its hopes into achievements is an unflagging moral energy. In social progress the race is not to the swift. The years of a man's life slip by and the gains for Humanity seem small for all the struggling. Inch by inch territory is won from the sway of reaction. The frenzied fight of the liquor interest against the Licensing Bill of 1908, and the furore of most of the land-owning class against the Budget of 1909, illustrate the dogged resistance to be met and overcome at each decisive onward step. Unless men are sustained by an unbending courage, their ardour wanes. A close observer of public affairs could readily name the spent enthusiasts among us, the disillusioned and disheartened. Because opposition is so strenuous, because advance is so laboured, because the rank and file seem fickle, here a leader falters, there one gives up the fight.

Hence the need of an undimmed vision, an unquenchable faith, the need of a moral dynamic. To the Christian this simply means that the supreme equipment for the leader of Democracy is the spirit of the Christ. There is that in the public work of Jesus which makes the strongest appeal to the social labourer to-day. The picture of Him who tirelessly "went about doing good," thrusting aside temptations to court greatness at the cost of goodness, unspoiled by the praise of the people, undeterred by the malice of His foes, resolute in His calling when others quailed, obedient to "the heavenly vision" even unto death, perfectly mirrors the career of all who would serve the people. He was the High Priest of Humanity because He was "faithful," and there is a true sense in which the social idealist must share the priesthood of Jesus if he also is to be loyal to the public cause. "Is not every true Reformer, by the nature of

him, a *Priest* first of all? He appeals to Heaven's invisible justice against Earth's visible force; knows that it, the invisible, is strong and alone strong. He is a believer in the divine truth of things; a *seer*, seeing through the show of things; a worshipper, in one way or another, of the divine truth of things; a Priest, that is. If he be not first a Priest, he will never be good for much as a Reformer."¹

The greatest moral qualification for social service is persistent discipleship of Jesus. Whoever plights his troth to truth and justice, as Jesus did, and keeps His vow with singleness of heart must tread the selfsame way of sacrifice; but sacrifice gives birth to strength, to the compelling power that wears down evil and establishes good. There is no disillusion for the follower of Jesus. Still to His armies, in token of victory, a cross is blazoned on the morning sky, with call and promise set in flame, "By this, conquer!"

II. THE VITAL NEEDS OF THE CHURCH

The vital needs of the New Age are character and moral power to achieve. What are those of the Church in these momentous days?

Emphasis was laid in the last chapter on the need for a higher level of spiritual experience. In addition the Church requires, first, a clear apprehension of the Will of God for social life; and, secondly, a complete fellowship with man.

1. *A Clear Apprehension of the Will of God for Social Life*

The Church is equipped with a theology which covers only a part of human life. The relation of the individual to God has been discussed with minuteness by theologians, the doctrines of personal salvation have

¹ Carlyle, *The Hero as Priest*.

been exhaustively examined, especially by writers of the Evangelical school. The relation of the Christian communities to Christ, and to one another, is debated keenly by Sacerdotalists and Evangelicals; we are far from hearing the last word on controversies concerning Church and Ministry, but none will complain that the subject escapes attention! Yet when we pass from doctrines of grace and dogmas relating to the nature of the Church, and seek to discover the teachings of the Church concerning the social order, it is to enter a province of Christian thinking scarcely explored.

This is a tragedy. Commerce and politics are ceaselessly agitated by the claims of labour. The finest minds in public life are framing and testing theories of social reconstruction. The issues of the question are pre-eminently moral, touching the rights and responsibilities of men and mankind. The subject is therefore within the frontiers of Christian thought. The primitive Christian Church, in days when economic science was undreamt of, exercised a fearless Prophetic and Healing Ministry; she interpreted history in terms of religion, condemned social wrong, asserted the authority of righteousness, accepted Humanity's sufferings as part of her due burden, and built up her corporate life on a strict principle of brotherly love. The contemporary Church, in days when the General Mind is occupied with the problems of social relationships, has reached no clear conclusions on these matters; and so on moral issues of the first magnitude which engross public attention, and respecting which men are eager to hear, the Church is hesitant and gives no lead.

The cause of the tragedy is plain. The Church has gradually and tacitly come to assent to a theory of dualism in life. She has taught what one may call a *domestic* application of Christian ethics, that men should be chaste, temperate, industrious, and kindly; but, in the main, has refrained from a

public application of Christian ethics, that is from their application to industrial affairs and international relationships. She has left men to do as they thought best—or most profitable—in these fields of activity. The consequence is that commercial and political practices antagonise the Sermon on the Mount at every turn. Men have done as they would, unrestrained by any compact body of Christian conviction. The present tangle of injustices, and periodic outbursts of insurrection, display the result.

Yet surely the basal social assertion of Christianity is indisputably clear, namely, that the Will of God is to dominate the whole of human life. Nothing must be exalted above that, neither the interests of money-making, nor theories of economics, however closely woven into the fabric of society they may be. Christ is “far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion.” *All things* are to be subjected to Him. Moreover, since the Church is His Body it is through her that His Will should touch and transform Humanity. She therefore fails her Lord if she timorously shrinks from encounter with a Mammon-loving world. The rights of God to rule commerce and politics can no more be disregarded with impunity in modern Britain than in ancient Israel. Church and nation suffer where religion relinquishes her lawful claim to rule.

The Christian thinker has right of entry into the province of social relationships. The occasional incursions into these territories in the past must be succeeded by a systematic and sustained exploration. Dr. Dale pointed out thirty years ago that the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century by its re-emphasis on the doctrine of entire sanctification placed the key to the social situation in the hands of the Church of that day.

We are living in a new world, and Evangelicals do not seem to have discovered it. The immense development of the manufacturing industries, the wider separation

of classes in great towns—a separation produced by the increase of commercial wealth—the new relations which have grown up between the employers and the employed, the spread of popular education, the growth of a vast popular literature, the increased political power of the masses of the people, the gradual decay of the old aristocratic organisation of Society, and the advance, in many forms, of the spirit of democracy—have urgently demanded fresh applications of the eternal ideas of the Christian faith to conduct. But evangelical Christians have hardly touched the new ethical problems which have come with the new time.

There was one doctrine of John Wesley's—the doctrine of entire sanctification—which ought to have led to a great original ethical development; but the doctrine has not grown; it seems to remain where John Wesley left it. There has been a want of the genius or the courage to attempt the solution of the immense practical questions which the doctrine suggests. The questions have not been raised—much less solved. To have raised them effectively, indeed, would have been to originate an ethical revolution which would have had a far deeper effect on the thought and life—first of England, and then on the rest of Christendom—than was produced by the Reformation of the sixteenth century.¹

Looking back to the eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution was in its beginnings, one sees the truth of Dr. Dale's words. The whole industrial history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have been different had religious convictions guided the economic development of our nation. How the reverse was the case, how social morality and commercial enterprise parted, the earlier section of this book on "The Rise of Democracy in Britain" sets out at large.

The past cannot be altered. The present can. In the fresh series of beginnings which marks the New Age, the Church can bear her part. She can see to it that each successive social development bears moral sanctions, is dictated by ethics as well as by expediency.

¹ Dale, *Evangelical Revival and Other Sermons*, pp. 38, 39.

But remoteness from social affairs cannot accomplish this. An intimate and sympathetic approach to the social question is essential. Her ministers, to whom leadership in the Church is committed, must be qualified to speak on the moral aspects of industrial and national problems. This involves the inclusion of certain branches of economics in the curriculum of theological colleges—industrial history, theories of social life, together with the social ethics of the Bible.

As this ground is carefully worked over by Christian thinkers answers to the challenging questions of the day will become clearer. The Will of God for social life will be disclosed through study, conference, and prayer. Take the following as examples of social issues which sharply divide contemporary opinion, yet which—since they raise moral considerations of the gravest nature—must be capable of answer from the point of view of Christian morality :

Are the extremes of poverty and wealth, characteristic of all industrial nations, morally defensible ?

Is the commercial principle of trading for private profit reconcilable with the moral obligations of traders to the public, to their fellow-traders, and to their employees ? Is the alternative method of private trading, the Trust, reconcilable with similar moral obligations ?

Is the burden of war-armaments inevitable ?

How are the racial relationships, of white and negro populations, and of Western and Eastern peoples, to be equitably determined ?

Here is work for Christian heart and brain. Never did larger responsibilities fall on the Church of Christ than now. Within our lifetime immense moral

achievements, or immense blunders, will be made, as Democracy climbs to power. Let not the Church fail to make the moral contribution due from her to the thinking and doing of the New Age. She has apprehended and proclaimed the Will of God for the individual; wistfully the wise-hearted look to her to-day to apprehend and proclaim the Will of God for the race.

2. *A Complete Fellowship with Man*

The Church is exposed to the scarcely recognised peril of a limited human fellowship. The discussion on "Non-Church-going" established this. It was shown that the Church's greatest successes are won amongst those dowered with a fair degree of economic security. Because this is so, she is in danger of restricting her outlook to their need, her line of appeal and modes of organised work to their habits of thought and action. The Church, which should be the helper of Everyman, tends to become chiefly the friend of the Middle-Class. Her ministers are thrown into daily contact with employers, and employees of the higher grades, who are prone to take the employers' point of view, since they, as men of affairs and financial ability, usually fill the most responsible offices of the Church: in consequence, the Christian ministry is tempted to lose, or never gain, the detachment from social groupings which ought to be its mark, and to come to look on life from the Middle-Class point of view. In such case the ministry loses prophetic power, assails but feebly the complacent injustice of the age, and serves instead as the priesthood of conventional morality, safeguarding it against the critic and insurrectionary; its healing function, which should discern and wrestle with the causes of human suffering, dwindles into almsgiving; while in lieu of a fervent evangelism to all sorts and conditions of men certain of its pastorates

resemble private chaplaincies to groups of the well-to-do.

This limitation of the Church's fellowship maims and distorts her Witness. Consider the relationship in which she ought to stand to the multitudes of the Poor. She should be their interpreter and spokesman. As Isaiah pleaded their cause against Judean oppressors, as Paul and his brother apostles shaped the life of the primitive Christian communities that none of their members should suffer destitution, so the Church in every generation is called to bear a similar Prophetic and Healing Witness to the world-order. But aloofness from the ways of the poor is fatal to effective interpretation of their human rights.

Take a recent instance, the great strikes of 1911. It was the Common Labourer of England, as Mr. Chesterton calls him, who raised his voice angrily in those menacing days, resentful against the increasing hardships of his lot—the seaman, the docker, the carman, the porter. England was startled. The plain man was on the march. His pound or twenty-five shillings a week was insufficient for wholesome family living; it was underpay for overwork. So he claimed a juster share in the common Right to Live. Even Labour leaders were taken unawares, unprepared for the vast upheaval. It was a golden opportunity for the Church to plead the cause of the poor. Alas! she too was unready. Had the Church *known* the poor, not ecclesiastically as sinners beyond the pale, but humanly as brothers in distress; known them as the Grey Friars of Francis knew the dwellers in Oxford's fever-haunted swamps, as Wyclif's "poor priests" knew the peasantry, or as the early Methodist preachers knew the colliers of Kingswood and the North; had the Church been in intimate fellowship with the poor of the land, she could have told their tale and urged their simple human rights. But the Church as a whole did not know; the story of the low wage and the long hours

of the Common Labourer came as a shock to tens of thousands of her members, as to the middle-class public generally. Hence the limited Witness she could bear in the time of crisis; the counsel against violence and the prayer for peace. These were necessary, yet only a part of what was necessary. Grave moral questions were involved. "There is a Divine Right or else a Diabolic Wrong at the heart of every claim that one man makes upon another." Had the Church been equipped with knowledge—the knowledge which daily fellowship with the poor can give—and with courage to use her knowledge, she could have laid bare the moral issues of the struggle. She could have shown what scanty pay means in terms of life—in shattered homes, in blighted childhood, in visionless and untrained youth, in coarsened and burdened manhood and womanhood. In these ways the Church could have made clear, what thousands fail to understand, that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty."

The industrial crises of 1911 will not have been without educational value if they have impressed the fact that in place of an unreflecting acceptance of the middle-class standpoint the Church, which is to comprehend all classes, should interpret class to class. To the middle-class man, who instinctively mistrusts Labour movements and claims, she should disclose their cause in the narrow and distressful lot of the poor, and teach him to think himself into their circumstances and feel the pressure of their troubles. For the middle-class man who is hostile to the uprising of organised Labour is like the driver of a motor-car who wonders why pedestrians grumble at him: let him turn pedestrian, foot the weary miles while powerful cars rush swiftly by, inhale the dust raised by other motorists, find his gaze limited by hedges grey that once were green, and experience will bring understanding. It is on this change of the point of

view that the Christian preacher needs to insist ; but he can only do so effectively if he, the leader of the local Church, himself enters as friend and brother into the life of the poor around him.

The limitation of the Church's fellowship with men also lessens the range of her spiritual appeal. Where she is out of comradeship with the poor, her Saving Witness fails to impress them. That is one explanation of the breach between the Churches and the people in the poverty-areas. Open-air preaching in court and alley bears little fruit unless the evangelist is also a comrade in the struggle for economic justice. On the other hand, where human fellowship grows between the Church and the poor there the Saving Witness has power. The fellowship may begin in a common revolt against social wrong. It will not stay there. It cannot. "The man in men needs God." Once the heart is fired with passion for a worthier social life it is not unresponsive to the call for a worthier personal life. Among the hardworking poor, alienated though multitudes of them are from the Church, there flourish the simple human virtues, telling how rich is the soil the Church is called to till. Think of the self-forgetting neighbourly kindnesses of one to another, of the brave and patient endurance of illness and want. Remember how every industrial disaster or national crisis brings to light the heroism of the plain man. Who ever heard of colliers holding back from the perils of a burning or a flooded mine while there was a chance to save their mates ? "The men are splendid," was the verdict on the rank and file in the South African war. The plain, poor man is often the hero. In the sons and daughters of poverty there is a wealth of capacity for moral greatness, of a distinctively Christian character.

All that hath been majestic
In life or death, since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel-heart of man.

Harsh economic restrictions debase a life God meant to be fine and fair in every part. The Church's undivided Witness, Prophetic, Healing, and Redeeming, points the way back to the Divine Intention. Yet the message alone cannot save. At the first, Incarnation preceded redemption. In the life of the Christ, the manger, the artisan's home and the carpenter's shop led on to the ministry of forgiveness. Fellowship in the common things is still the way to fellowship in the life eternal. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," then "*we beheld His glory.*"

III. THE NEW AGE AND THE CHURCH

In an ancient borough on the East coast of England a sanctuary historic in the annals of its denomination was destroyed by fire. Nothing remained intact save the foundations ; the fire practically razed the building to the ground. It was decided to rebuild on the same site, utilising the old foundations, except that the new frontage should extend beyond the outline of the former building, so as to be nearer the thoroughfare on which the former chapel had faced. The new structure was statelier than the old. Modern architectural devices, modern methods of lighting, heating, and ventilation, modern provisions for the manifold denominational enterprises, united to make it a beautiful, spacious, and well-devised home of Christian worship and service. Not many months after the formal opening a serious structural flaw was revealed. Huge cracks from floor to roof showed that the section of the chapel erected beyond the old foundations was subsiding. The frontage was breaking away from the main structure. A spongy soil, an insufficient preparation below ground to sustain the massive towers and entrances, a gradual subsidence imperilling the ill-founded section of the building—such was the obvious and ominous explanation. The main body, resting on

the old and tried foundations, stood securely ; the frontage, standing on inadequate foundations set in an untried soil, was seriously endangered.

It is a parable of the New Age, of its possibilities and perils. The reconstruction of the social fabric is its appointed task. High aspirations for justice and for the enrichment of the common lot, together with the lessons taught by economic research, go to frame the plans for the coming social order. The cramped, strained life of the toilers is to give place to methods of industry that do not dishonour ; a Standard of Life compatible with the essential dignity of human nature, and within the power of all to attain, is to replace the existing inequitable contrasts of wasteful luxury and piteous destitution. This is not only conceivable but practicable. The faith of the New Age asserts

These things shall be ! a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

The vision of the seer and the skill of the statesman are blending to realise the dreams of the generations. The possible becomes the probable, the probable will become the actual, if—— If what ? If the foundations of the new order are well and truly laid. The primal need of the New Age is altruistic character, out of which will spring moral power to achieve. Based on aught else, the new social fabric is doomed to impermanency. Its weighty responsibilities cannot be sustained abidingly by the loose soil of self-advantage and the ambitions of the partisan. What self-interest builds it may destroy ; what party advantage seeks to-day it may scorn to-morrow. Mere material improvement will be equally unsufficing. "Man shall not live by bread alone." On character imbued with passion for Christ and Humanity, on visions of the soul that touch the doings of Time with the splendours of Eternity,

on "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" shall man live. To establish the new order on any other ground than the proved ground of self-giving for love of God and man is to condemn the social labours of this age to ineffectiveness. Altruism is the necessary foundation of the social structure.

What of the future of the Church? What do these portentous days betoken for her?

The New Age needs the Church. That is the first truth to grasp. The power that fashions the altruist, and makes him strong to achieve, is in her keeping. Her sacred charge is to declare the wealth of the Christ-nature and to impart it, to proclaim ideals for Humanity, to purge the life of man of the unrighteousness that rends and slays, and to base the world-order on the righteousness of God.

The correlative truth is this. To meet the needs of the New Age the Church must be in closer fellowship with God and men. She requires a clear apprehension of His Will for an age dominated by social conceptions, and an intimacy with the poor and disinherited no less free and constant than her present intimacy with the well-to-do. Affairs go ill with the Church because these essentials, in no small measure, are lacking. A fresh vision of the Holy Will, with a quickened sensitiveness to human suffering and wrong, will lead to a re-baptism of the Christ-spirit. Then once again the Church will tread with resolute purpose the Way of Life, leading the crusades of the Heavenly Kingdom; for vision begets militancy, the uprising of believing sons of God against the things of shame.

It is the Carmel story once more. Israel, whose streams ran low and pastures withered for want of dew and rain, whose sorrows were heavy because king and people had turned from the simple faith of their fathers, saw on the mountain-side the overthrow of apostasy, and raised the shout of renewed allegiance,

“Jehovah, He is God.” And he who saved Israel, Elijah, went up to the top of Carmel, and bade his servant look toward the sea until at last there rose up out of the sea a cloud, as small as a man’s hand. Small, yet enough ; “ It came to pass in a little while that the heaven grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.” Out of the sea arose the land’s salvation.

A drought has smitten the pastures of the Church. Parched and brown they lie ; the rush and outpouring of joyous activity is stayed. Is not the day of Carmel at hand ? A voice here and there may brand the prophet of rebuke a “troubler of Israel” ; the awakening conscience of the Church as a whole interprets the reverses of these days otherwise, and sees in them proof that commandments of the Lord have been forsaken. The heart of the Church is searching after the old way of passionate love to God and man. The moment of decisive choice is upon us. The worship of Baal is the denial of Jehovah ; true hearts cannot serve God and Mammon. To halt between two opinions is to lengthen the days of decline. Elijah-like, the very needs of the New Age cry to the Church, “ If Jehovah be God, follow Him ! ” Will she not cast time-serving to the winds ? To *follow* God is to war against all that thwarts His Will, to carry the battle against Baal to the utter overthrow of Baal’s prophets. Let the Church believe mightily in the Most High, staking everything on simple and all-comprehending loyalty to Him. Let her rise to the challenge of the hour, and fulfil her triple ministry to its extremest bounds. To do so means, it has been shown, that she must oppose a true Prophetic Witness to the false, rejecting the assumption that in private life, in commerce, or in politics, money interests can ever be superior to those of morality, and asserting, on the contrary, the authority of social justice and the obligations of brotherly love ; it means that her comradeship with the suffering and

with the poor will deepen, until men see in her the Healer of society, an interpreter of the needs of the distressed, a spokesman of the rights of man ; it means, further, that the evangel of Salvation will become again, as it was in the beginning, good tidings of great joy *to all the people*, the Witness of Character, for which beyond all else the New Age waits.

Given this renaissance of faith and daring, the Church may face the future with optimism. The God of Elijah will break up the drought. They who stand for Him on Carmel may mark already from its crest the little cloud rising out of the sea, the herald of a great rain. Seaward lies our hope ! Beyond the coastline of the Church, out of the unresting tide of Humanity, rise the aspirations of the common folk. A Power, other than themselves, that makes for righteousness, quickens their imagination and yearning ; the social idealism of Democracy soars at the call of God. By-and-by the cloud of hope will cover the sky, for social consciousness is reborn to reign ; there will be no waning of the vision, no turning back to the crude and desolating individualism of the last century. The cloud of hope rises out of the sea of common life, updrawn by God ; if His Church confronts with unyielding will the evils of the time, then on her thirsting shores the rain of refreshing will surely fall. The God of the sea and the land, of the Democracy and the Ecclesia, is one God, working in all and through all and over all to one purpose. The people will come back to the Church as the Church comes back to the cause of the people. At heart their cause is one. Both Church and people have as their truest aim the supremacy of righteousness, both find in Mammon their deadliest foe. As the Ecclesia draws closer to the mind of her Master, the Suffering Servant of God and Humanity, and sees in the spirit of greed the real Anti-Christ whom she must fight to the death ; as Democracy learns with growing consciousness that in

its dreams the teachings of Jesus live again ; so the way back to the Father, for Church and people alike, will stand disclosed and open. Along that way the Church and the people will travel together. It is the way through Christ, the Way of Life.

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